

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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**FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—I**

*by* AUGUSTUS JOHN

**JAMES JOYCE**

*by* FRANK BUDGEN

**TRAVELLER'S RETURN**

*by* LOUIS MACNEICE

WAR SYMPOSIUM:

**i) FELLOW TRAVELLERS IN FACTORY**

*by* INEZ HOLDEN

**(ii) THE LAST INSPECTION**

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**INTRODUCING COSTALS**

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**POEMS** *by* STEPHEN SPENDER, CECIL DAY-LEWIS, NICHOLAS  
MOORE, KEIDRYCH RHYS AND JOHN BETJEMAN

**REVIEWS** *by* STEPHEN SPENDER AND A. L. ROWSE

**DRAWING** *by* AUGUSTUS JOHN

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***Edited by Cyril Connolly***

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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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## American Magazines

A few sample copies of the  
*Southern Literary Messenger*  
are available (postage 2d.).

*Southern Review* (Autumn  
1940).

'Literature and the Professors',  
a Symposium; 'What is Living  
and What is Dead in Marxism?',  
by Sidney Hook; 'Trotsky', by  
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From the Secretary,  
**Horizon**

6 Selwyn House, Lansdowne  
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# COMMENT

A YEAR ago *Horizon* published a number of articles by writers who held different views about the war. In March there was R. F. Harrod on 'Peace Aims and Economics', and an attack on the Liberal intellectuals, including the Editor of *Horizon*, by the communist Howard Evans. Later there were articles by R. H. S. Crossman, J. B. Priestley and F. McEachran.

At that time 'war aims' were under discussion. There were rumours about what the French were going to do with Germany 'this time'. People wrote to the papers to outline the kind of peace terms which were being discussed in Clubs. The nature of these speculations was decided by whether the writer thought of all Germans as Nazis or of some of them as Nazis and the rest as Germans.

During this phase of rather wishful thinking we felt that it was best to give space to all points of view. A very important question was being canvassed, and something might emerge from frank discussion. At the same time it did not seem quite the moment to come forward with '*Horizon's* peace terms'. We had our sympathies, and if an effective body of opinion had put forward realistic terms we should have supported them. Meanwhile, one of the most important lessons for the artist seemed to be to act only where he can be most effective. For us this seemed to be the encouragement of creative art and the expression of free opinion.

Things have now altered. It is regrettable that the Government has put forward no peace aims. At the same time the absurdity of well-intentioned amateurs putting forward their views on what they would do on winning the war has become apparent. On the other hand, the experts should keep the subject of war aims open. And the Government should be pressed to publish its war and peace aims.

There are problems which we can discuss effectively in *Horizon*. These are close to us and immediate and urgent. They are concerned with the great task of constructing a better Britain after the war. But 'after the war' means now. Because it is now that we have the opportunity of establishing new ideas where old ones have collapsed, of planning better cities where the old ones have been bombed, of replacing bankrupt institutions by better ones,

of defending our old, and insisting on new and wider, social liberties.

The time has gone by when we can approach these problems in a spirit of speculation. We have, therefore, planned a series of articles by churchmen, politicians, scientists, technicians, educationists, thinkers and writers, all of whom agree that reconstruction is necessary, in order to achieve victory, and a further victory after the military victory. The first two articles of this series will appear in the next number.

Without such a policy there will be little place for the creative artist in the post-war world. However, as a magazine of literature and art, *Horizon's* policy does not begin and end with practical politics. Beyond it there remains our policy of publishing the best writing we can find, in the conviction that literature deals with longer term and more universal aims than any political programme.

Literature, when it is the servant of politics, becomes mere propaganda. It ignores truth for the exigencies of the political line of the moment; and it has a provincial view of life which ignores permanent subjects of art, such as death, love, the immensity of the universe. We are convinced that no art, and ultimately no politics, can exist without an awareness of these problems, unless the men of our time are to suffer from a kind of spiritual claustrophobia.

S. S.

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## WAR SYMPOSIUM

This number introduces a series of contributions dealing directly with the war, which will consist of stories, essays, letters, or *reportage*. The next number of *Horizon* will include a letter from a private, and a letter from an officer. There will also be an analysis of the *Questionnaire* by its originator, Peter Cromwell.

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CECIL DAY-LEWIS

## THE REBUKE

Down in the lost and April days  
What lies we told, what lies we told!  
Nakedness seemed the one disgrace,  
And there'd be time enough to praise  
The truth when we were old.

The irresponsible poets sung  
What came into their head:  
Time to pick and choose among  
The bold profusions of our tongue  
When we were dead, when we were dead.

Oh wild the words we uttered then  
In woman's ear, in woman's ear,  
Believing all we promised when  
Each kiss created earth again  
And every far was near.

Little we guessed, who spoke the word  
Of hope and freedom high  
Spontaneously as wind or bird  
To crowds like cornfields still or stirred,  
It was a lie, a heart-felt lie.

Now the years advance into  
A calmer stream, a colder stream,  
We doubt the flame that once we knew,  
Heroic words sound all untrue  
As love-lies in a dream.

Yet fools are the old who won't be taught  
Modesty by their youth:  
That pandemonium of the heart,  
That sensual arrogance did impart  
A kind of truth, a kindling truth.

Where are the sparks at random sown,  
 The spendthrift fire, the holy fire?  
 Who cares a damn for truth that's grown  
 Exhausted haggling for its own  
 And speaks without desire?

NICHOLAS MOORE

## EPISTLE FROM CAMBRIDGE

(To Hugh Gleave)

Here, from this hospitable and academic town,  
 I send greetings to you, Hugh, across the hills and the valleys,  
 Hoping you find in England, too, the promise I do,  
 Hoping that, where the wave rustles by the shore  
 Or where the wind takes trees into its force,  
 You see, as I see, the coming wound of winter;

Hear, too, across continents the weeping of women, drowned  
 Under the flood of blood and the welter of a world's slaughter,  
 And remember this might be your love or my love  
 Signalling a wan distress from a distant home.  
 We are still here and in our hungry anger not alone,  
 But with the bombed find promise, with the deceived a hope.

This is Europe, here on our English landscape, nor can we  
 Find any escape in the escapades of our heroes,  
 Or be consoled by a cold political voice. The choice  
 Is here. Do we choose to remain in the quiet  
 Of our memories, warm in our loves on this winter night,  
 Or does our blood run riot through hill and valley?

Here is a town that is warm, not afraid of the winter,  
 Well-fed on its learning. Here are people who find  
 Delight in things of the mind, and dull shopkeepers  
 Who make their living from it. This is the city.  
 These walk by the riverside, find it pretty,  
 Curse Hitler, and hope his bombs will never fall



Over this little world that belongs to them all.  
These are the narrow and powerful. They have claws  
To snatch at a profit, who dream to feather a nest  
Where no stranger or foreigner comes. They love their homes.  
But even here now is the dissident voice of the few  
Who have learnt their history, who have watched, and know,

Hear the acknowledged words of the politicians,  
And make protest about their living conditions.  
O, the Cam is idle. The water flows to no good,  
Here in this hospitable and devilish town,  
Where no one cares for anyone but his own.  
The narrow and powerful rule, the protests go down.

But look, Hugh, over the hills and valleys of England,  
At the lakes you love, at the places I love and know,  
As I love this town of my birth, and admit with me  
The limitations of this, our own country,  
As we also see the limitations of others.  
The voice that protests is the voice we must follow.

I send greetings to you, Hugh, and I send messages.  
I say remember, this Christmas that Christ was born,  
That something else is about to be, that a magic  
Babe is alive in the womb of history,  
And join with me in hoping it may be happy,  
And bring the people their promise, the future they wish for.

STEPHEN SPENDER

## AIR RAID

In this room like a bowl of flowers filled with light  
The family eyes look down on the white  
Pages of a book, and the mild white ceiling,  
Like a starched nurse, reflects a calm feeling.

The daughter with hands outstretched to the fire  
Transmits through her veins the peaceful desire  
Of the family tree from which she was born  
To push tendrils through nights to a promiseful dawn.

In the gray stone house and the glass-and-steel flat  
The vertical descendants of the bones that  
Have sprung from the past, are supported on floors  
And protected by walls from the wind outdoors.

In their complex surroundings, they act out the part  
Of the flesh home of the human heart,  
With limbs extending to chairs, tables, cups,  
All the necessities and props.

They wear the right clothes and acquire the safe ways,  
Hear the news, discuss golf, and fill out their days  
With work, and meals brought from the kitchen range.  
And no one sees anything empty or strange

In all this. And perhaps that is right. Nothing is  
Until an unreasoning fury impinges  
From a different vision of life, on their hearth.  
It explodes; and tears the place down to earth.

Then the inside made outside faces the street.  
Rubble decently buries the human meat.  
Piled above it, a bath, cupboards, books, telephone,  
Though all who could answer its ringing have gone.

Standing untouched is a solitary wall,  
Half a floor attached, which failed to fall.  
Involved pink patterns and light blues line  
That rectangle high up where they used to dine.

Distressed passers by are bound to observe  
The painted paper, like the polished curve  
Salivaed with mother-o'-pearl, in a shell  
Where a living sensitive snail did once dwell.

But the home has been cracked by metallic claws,  
Years of loving care ground to rubble in jaws,  
And the delicate squirming life thrown away  
By the high-flying purpose of a foreign day.

*January 1941.*

## STEPHEN SPENDER

### DUSK

Steel edge of plough  
Thrusts through the stiff  
Ruffled fields of turf  
Cloud in the sky.  
Above charcoal hedges  
And dead leaf of land  
It cuts out a gleaming  
Deep furrow  
Of clear glass looking  
Through our thick day  
Up a stair of stars.

On earth below  
The knotted hands  
Lay down their tasks  
And the wooden handles  
Of steel implements  
Lie on the ground.  
The shifting animals  
Wrinkle their muzzles  
At the sweet passing peace  
Of evening breeze;  
And the will of man  
Floats light, released.

The dropping day  
Encloses the universe  
In a wider circle  
Than meridian blaze.  
A terra-cotta blanket  
Robs one by one  
Recognition from villages  
Features from flowers  
News from men  
And stones from the sun.



All the names fade away.  
With a spasm, naked bodies  
Take over men.  
Their minds cast adrift  
On beds in rooms,  
Awaiting the anchor  
Of sleep, see more  
Than a landscape of words.

The great lost river  
Begins to flood  
Through creeks of their brains,  
And buried days  
Rise in their dreams.  
Their hands unclench  
The power they hold  
The manners, and gold.

Then the burning eye  
Of a timeless being  
Looks through their limbs,  
Drawing up through these lives  
Mists of the past  
Filled with chattering apes  
Bronze and stone gifts,  
All the continents  
Of the tree of Man.

The sun of such knowledge  
Mocks their aims—  
Robbing themselves  
And killing themselves.  
Abandoning hope  
They turn with a groan  
From that nightmare of love  
Back to their daybreak of  
Habitual hatred.

AUGUSTUS JOHN  
FRAGMENT OF  
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—I

WITHOUT premeditation and in an indifferent light we set to work at one corner of the immense canvas, upon which, as it stretches into darkness, we are to weave with so little skill the tapestry of our lives. The picture will never be finished and is marred by many confused, threadbare or mutilated passages, but at last and at a certain distance a Pattern will emerge which, though not of our designing, is the key and signature of Personality.

I shall attempt to write my life as I prefer to remember it, omitting what is insignificant, skipping what is dull, and leaving out all that is too shaming or too painful to be described. I should make a bad witness in a police court, for I remember no dates nor always the exact sequence of events. Nor, in the Russian style, am I given to laying my heart bare to the first comer, and I consider a certain reticence to be at times both necessary and becoming. All the same, this will be, as far as it goes, a truthful narrative and its silences themselves will be, perhaps, self-revelatory.

The town and county of Haverfordwest is situated on the southern side of the line separating Welsh- from English-speaking Pembrokeshire. It thus belongs to the region which has been known for centuries as Little England beyond Wales. Populated by a mixed race containing Scandinavian, Irish, Norman, Saxon, Flemish, and a preponderance of Welsh elements, the more snobbish inhabitants of this portion of the county prefer to call themselves 'Pembrokeshire Men' rather than Welsh. Though born at Tenby, I spent the first five or six years of my childhood at Haverfordwest, where my father practised Law, as did his father before him.

Memories of this distant period are few but clear enough. The scenes of our walks as children (there were four of us) on the outskirts of the town remain ineffaceable. The path by the river Cleddu, known as 'The Frolic', was my favourite excursion. Looking backward from it the old town can be seen rising steeply

from mouldering wharves to culminate in the gloomy keep of a Norman castle. Beyond the tidal flats a railway train would sometimes appear to issue, as if by magic, from the ruins of an ancient priory and, trailing its white banner, rumble industriously onwards till, with a long melancholy wail, it vanished into the hills. 'Whither?' I would ask myself wonderingly and 'Whence?' The walk known as 'Scotch Wells' was another popular haunt of ours. Past the flour-mill, booming and thumping with its rather terrifying miller, white from top to toe, the path follows the mill stream under a colonnade of trees. My father, leading the way, preserved a moderate but unvarying speed, while his children in the rear conducted guerrilla operations by no means confined to the right-of-way.

Upon the untimely death of my mother, two aunts, Lila and Rosina, took charge of our upbringing: these ladies were intensely religious and sought the true way of worship in every creed and denomination, ranging from the Established Church to the Salvation Army. The sole exception was Roman Catholicism, which was considered the very Devil in our household. Even the servants used to inform us in shocked tones that '*Roman Catholics worship the Virgin Mary*', and we were too overcome by the implied horror of this information to be able to indulge our natural curiosity and inquire 'Why?' My aunt Lila had even 'tried the Spirits', but soon decided to eschew them as being more than likely evil. She was something of a leading light in her day and had toured the United States bringing souls to Jesus with much success. Her quest for Truth had brought her within the Princess Adelaide's Circle, of which she was an esteemed member, but her main loyalty was to the 'Army', where she attained, I believe, a certain rank. The two sisters drove about the country in a wicker pony-trap holding revival meetings, their vehicle being popularly known as 'The Hallelujah Chariot'. Under the spell of my Aunt Lila's eloquence I have seen strong men fling themselves prostrate upon the floor, weeping miserably. A brave and cheerful soul, she was a much stronger character than her sister Rosina, whose spiritual activities were in part hampered by a poor digestion. Rosina was apt to change her diet as often as her place or form of worship. At one time it might be 'The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion', with raw beef and hot water, at another Joanna Southcote and grapes, or again, The Society of



Friends plus charcoal biscuits washed down with Browntree's Electric Cocoa. In this wholesome atmosphere I was in no case to withstand the pressure put upon me when, at five years old, I was persuaded to sign, with assistance, the Blue Ribbon Pledge of total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages. If at any time since I have bowed to temptation I put it down to the exigences of an artist's profession. I did certainly keep the Pledge for some years, but I claim no merit in this respect, for in those days we were able to get roaring drunk on a pint of milk. Maybe the milk was stronger then.

Of all the churches and chapels to which we were taken of a Sunday I think I liked most the humble little Bethels, Sions and Bethesdas in the country districts. Here the homely yet sonorous language, being quite unintelligible, seemed for some reason to be the more pregnant of meaning, and the surge and resurge of the hymns, sung with so admirable a fervour and harmony, most moving; while the preacher, finally, as he, like one possessed, worked up to the *Hwyl*, or divine afflatus, with which all good Welsh sermons must terminate, appeared, indeed, to be authentically inspired. Though with the passing of my aunts, my father, after many hesitations at the multiple cross-roads of nonconformity, returned at last to Orthodoxy and the Bosom of the Church-in-Wales and saw to it that his children too were properly confirmed according to the rites of the more ancient Cult, still preserve a tenderness for the devotional usages of a simpler but no less real Faith, and can hardly yet pass a devoted band of Salvationists at the street corner without being afflicted with a sense of Original Sin.

It was a great occasion when first we were taken to the Circus, enough with grave misgivings on the part of our aunts. I remember little of this performance except the dazzling appearance of a singularly beautiful woman in tights, apropos of whom I overheard a common fellow nearby remark mysteriously to his companion: 'She've a-been spliced.' Two other young ladies, equally lovely, attired in full hunting kit, sang in unison a couple of songs. One began, 'His moustache was down to heah, Tiddy-oll-ol,' etc., and the other, 'I've a penny in my pocket, La-de-ah'. These items on the programme are, perhaps, not worth mentioning except that they serve to date me. Much as I have loved and frequented the Circus since, I find myself more and

more unable to tolerate that cruel and stupid convention of strapping the horses' noses down to their chests, thus stereotyping what should and would be a momentary and beautiful action, beautiful indeed because momentary. This damnable practice makes me as uncomfortable as the horses, and I don't want to see any more circuses. The Theatre or Play being, of course, taboo, another form of entertainment to which we were admitted without scruple was 'Poole's Diorama'. It consisted of a vast picture, or series of pictures, which, occupying the whole of the stage upon an endless canvas, was gradually unrolled while a gentleman in the corner with a wand pointed out and explained the objects of interest as they came into view. By these means we were enabled to make the tour of the world very comfortably and were familiarized with scenes of rare and exotic splendour, including glimpses of contemporary warfare in foreign lands. When, however, it came to The Bombardment of Alexandria, we were prudently, though much to our disgust, led out, lest the infernal din which accompanied this event might upset our tender nervous systems. I now think the 'Diorama' contained the germ of a splendid Art form, the development of which was cut short by the advent of the Cinema. In these days of universal pokeyness, the 'Diorama' in the hands of the Artist could provide the necessary scope and space for the resuscitation of the forgotten *Grand* and combine the Arts of Painting and Music in a common vehicle. Can one not imagine a symphonic poem in form and colour slowly unfolded in this way to the majestic strains of some successor to Handel or Scarlatti?

An incident occurred at a pleasure fair at Prendergast which resulted curiously. A boy of my own age fell off the roundabout and was led away bleeding at the mouth. This spectacle so impressed me that later I somehow transferred it to myself, and for years afterwards imagined myself to be the victim and that my tongue had been partially amputated. This would certainly account for my speechlessness, which was further and consciously accentuated by the cult of the Red Indian, to which later I became a devotee, the noble savage, according to my authorities, having little to say but 'Ugh, ugh!', an utterance requiring no use of the tongue whatever.

On market days the town of Haverfordwest, or to give it its

ndearing popular title, 'Honey Harford', teemed with life and colour. The streets and square, crowded with country folk, cattle and sheep, rang with the vociferation of Welsh drovers, and the lowing of their beasts, affording a spectacle of endless variety and interest. Women from Langwm, said to be of Flemish origin, in their peculiar and admirable costume, with baskets of oysters on their back, plied their trade amidst the throng. Like many good country sights, these women are no longer to be seen and, alas! their excellent oysters too have disappeared. Strange and unaccountable characters appeared on the scene as if from another world. Philosophical looking tramps wandered into town with an air of detachment and no obvious motive. Perhaps they had passed the night on the limekilns, where it was said some of them at times found a comfortable though probably unforeseen means of escape from this rough world by inadvisedly falling asleep on the warm blocks of limestone to be slowly asphyxiated and finally reduced to ashes by the morning. Then there were the gypsies, arrogant and aloof, a race apart and apparently superior to the common herd. We were taught to dread and avoid these people on account of their well-known propensities for kidnapping children (though they seemed to have plenty of their own!), but passing, as we often did, one of their encampments by the roadside and encountering such ironic glances as were shot from those lustrous oriental eyes, I, for one, fell under a spell from which I am not yet delivered. A good many years, however, were to pass before I came to learn the ways or speech of the *Romané*. In the summer we were in the habit of moving to our house in St. Bride's Bay, and it was at Broad Haven that I was first granted supernatural vision. Walking on the beach with my father one day I looked out to sea and beheld an island which certainly was not there before. It stood up precipitously on the horizon, a squarish silhouette. I drew my father's attention to the phenomenon. He gave one glance, averted his head and, murmuring something unintelligible, hastened his steps. Could this have been the mystic Avalon, Hy-Brazil, Tir-nan-Ogue, one of the Islands of the Blest? I never saw it again. At Broad Haven we sometimes assisted at the interesting ceremony of Baptism by Total Immersion. The minister, standing up to his waist in a brook, ducked the neophytes one by one to an accompaniment of fervent hymn singing by the congregation on the banks. Young girls emerged gasping,



their thin black frocks transformed to classic drapery: a strange and moving rite which was sometimes performed even in the sea. A glimpse I obtained of one of our maids preparing to dress somewhat unguardedly after bathing left a permanent impression on my boyish mind. This revelation of feminine plenitude and grace may have determined my psychic orientation once and for all. I had, perhaps, at that moment met my Anima incarnated. Few indeed were our social contacts, for our invincible shyness, comparable only to that of the dwarf inhabitants of Equatorial Africa, resisted every advance on the part of strangers. It took a long time before a kind of armistice was established between us and a haughty, dare-devil and handsome tribe called George, who were our immediate neighbours at Broad Haven, and this was as near as we got to friendship. My pitiful attempts at drawing were now beginning to be handed round among the grown-ups, and I must say received a good deal of appreciation and encouragement. The occasional appearance of an artist at work had a magnetic effect on my sister Gwen and me, and we would timidly draw near to obtain a glimpse of the miraculous process of landscape painting. Our reading at that time, besides innumerable tracts, included such outstanding works as *Christie's Old Organ*, *Jessica's First Prayer* and *The Lamplighter*. But my father in the evenings would often delight us by reading aloud carefully bowdlerized versions of *The Arabian Nights* and also (for he was then studying the French language under the tutelage of a Monsieur de Berensburg, a Belgian exile) we were compelled to listen to his halting translation from the novels of Henri Conscience, an author whose complete works he had acquired and which represented the limits of his excursions into Continental literature, apart, of course, from his classical studies, for, as an old Cheltonian, he could quote you a line or two of Virgil without any difficulty. Then there was Dickens, of course, whose genius was acknowledged, even by my aunts, though naturally they deplored the amount of liquor with which the master found it necessary to lubricate his works. Thrown much among the domestics, I felt most at home in the kitchen. When, as sometimes happened, a groom or other person wandered in, troublesomely drunk, he was not upbraided by the women, but *sung* to till his froward heart would be melted in gentle tears of self-commiseration. We were taken now and then for a visit to a

cottage in the northern part of the country. There we would sit silently over our bowls of *cawl*, listening to the thunderous crepitation of the Welsh language. The men of the district were dark and bearded woodmen and wore long thin-pointed clogs capped with brass. Awestruck, I wondered if their feet were of the same shape. Old pagan customs, now fallen into desuetude, in those days were still extant, and both the Queen of the May and Jack in the Green claimed homage at their appointed Festivals. On a certain date, provided with sprigs of the Box Plant and mugs of water, we were accustomed to sally forth in the streets to asperge any strangers we met, with complete impunity to ourselves and no doubt great benefit to the recipients.

I will conclude these Haverfordwest notes with an anecdote illustrating the intellectual curiosity which is one of my chief traits. When out one day on 'The Frolic' with my nurse, who had been joined by a policeman (called, like all policemen, 'Simpson'), 'Mimi,' said I, 'where do babies come from?' In obvious confusion Mimi murmured something about gooseberry bushes, while Mr. Simpson partly concealed his amusement behind an enormous hand. This is my first recorded utterance. It was then that I began to suspect that the mystery of birth is attended with unspeakable but distinctly humorous connotations.

*(To be continued)*

FRANK BUDGEN

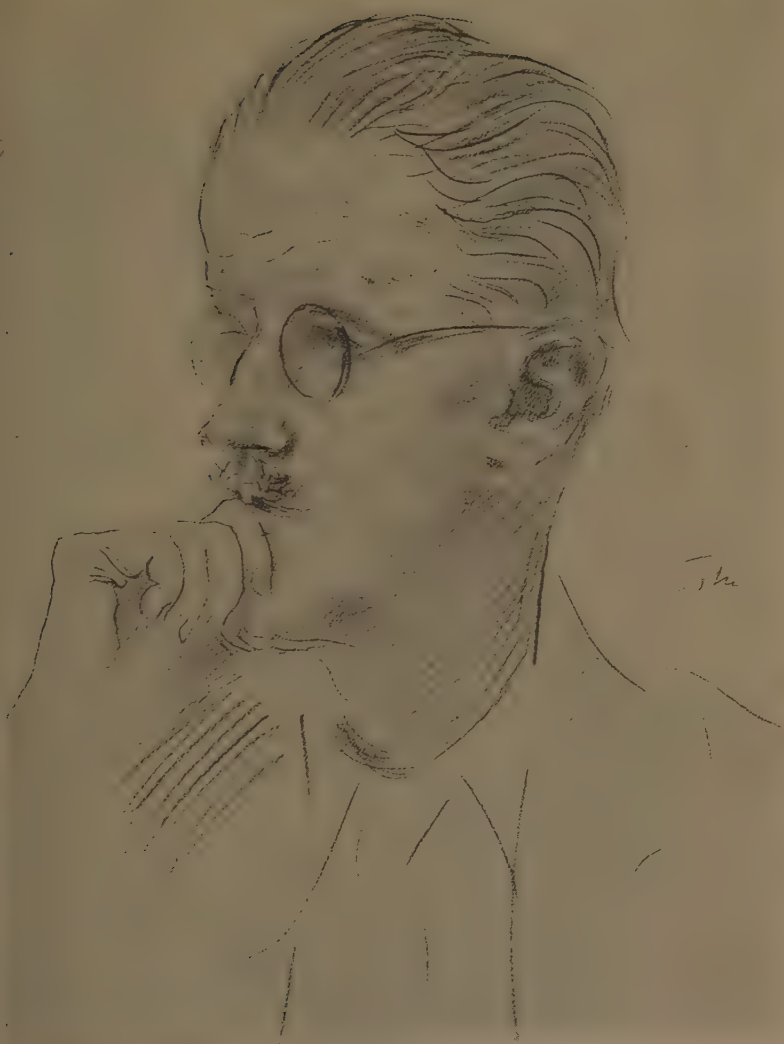
## JAMES JOYCE

AND so James Joyce has been laid to rest in Zürich. Of the many habitations of the self-exiled Dubliner none is better fitted to receive his mortal remains. He passed through Zürich as a young man on his way to Trieste. He returned there in the early days of the Great (1914-1918) War. It was there that the greater part of *Ulysses* took shape—there too that the seeds were sown which grew into *Finnegans Wake*. I met Joyce for the first time in a café garden on the slopes of the Zürichberg. He was then composing the Lestrygonians, the seventh episode of *Ulysses*. I saw him for the last time in the Spring of 1939 at his flat in Passy. A copy of *Finnegans Wake*, hot from the press, lay on the table. The third of his lifetime lay between. I read the news of his death as I was about to go on duty for the night. As usual, the threat of death was in the air, but I felt sad for the loss of a friend.

When I met him in Zürich he was, but for his eyes, a healthy though not a robust man, thin and tallish like a boy who has shot up too quickly. His face was a bricky red, his hair near black, his beard orange brown, his eyes clear blue, his lips thin and set in a straight line, his forehead high and domed but full of crisp, clean shape. He gave a limp hand and spoke with care, but unbent as the evening wore on. He explained his defensive attitude to me later. He was at loggerheads with the British Consulate, and he had heard that I was a consulate employee, so, putting two and two together, he thought I might be told off to spy upon his views and movements. What reassured him, it appears, was that I looked like Arthur Shrewsbury, the Notts and England cricketer, a good bat in his day.

We ought to know a lot about Joyce, seeing that he was at great pains to tell us all he could. He put himself in all his books. He is the unnamed boy in *Dubliners*, Stephen Dedalus in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Richard in *Exiles*, and Shem the Penman in *Finnegans Wake*, and if Joyce painted them himself, who shall say that any of them is a bad likeness? However, when the sitter has left his chair and the artist





Augustus John. Drawing of James Joyce



has packed up his colour box, the friends and relations may give their opinion. Mine is that the best likeness is the sensitive, watchful boy in *Dubliners*, and the over life-size caricature of Shem the Penman in *Finnegans Wake*. Stephen persisted in the shape of attitudes, mannerisms, learned in a Jesuit school, used for defensive purposes and by usage become habit.

Behind this defensive barrier there was a shrewd counsellor, a consistent and helpful friend, a good companion—talker and listener—and (what never appears in any of the self-portraits) a self-forgetting, impish humour expressed in fantastic antics and drolleries, songs and dances.

Joyce was a self-centred man. How can an artist take his cargo to port without concentrating on the sailing of his ship? But he was a man with a need for friends and a capacity for friendship with its egalitarian laws and constitution. After an estrangement of a couple of years Joyce, hearing I was in Paris, asked me to call, which I did. When he saw me to the door he said: 'I hope you'll always believe that I'm a good friend, Budgen.' There is nothing Stephenesque in that except the use of the surname. Joyce was afraid of Christian names, and the *Portrait of the Artist* gives the clue. He always addressed his letters to me as Francis Budgen, Esq. I told him I was christened Frank, but it made no difference. He just couldn't bring himself to write the more intimate sounding monosyllable, even prefaced with Mr. or adorned with Esq. It is worth noting that in all Joyce's work the relations between man and woman are of a monumental simplicity, and that complications and the subtler shades arise only in the relations between man and man.

He preferred the more formal manners of most Continental countries. English formlessness—such, for example, as a publisher addressing him as plain Joyce whilst sitting on a table and dangling his legs—gave him a shock. But he liked the English. I once praised French manners and advanced the theory that the people had taken them from the nobles at the same time that they took their lands. Joyce stopped for a moment in the street as a peasant comes to a standstill when he wants to say something important. 'Yes,' he said, 'the French are polite, but if you want civility you must go to England. The English have more civic sense than any people I know.' He thought French women the cleverest in the world and the most womanly. He liked Italy and

the Italians, but he could never forgive the Italian university (it was Padua, I think) that failed him in an examination in English. The examining professor was an old woman looking like Sairey Gamp, black bag and all complete, and no knowledge of English at all.

Joyce was afraid of thunder and all explosive noises, of dogs, nuns, and many other things, but he was less afraid of pain and sickness than most men. He bore the affliction of his eyes and his series of eye operations with remarkable fortitude. He was not afraid of human beings of whatever degree. And least of all was he afraid of failure. His confidence in himself was as unbounded as it appeared to be. Now we know that *Ulysses* was a best seller; but all the years of its composition Joyce laboured on it, reckless of time, not knowing how or by whom it would be published, aware that he was writing a masterpiece and just as aware that masterpieces may be the death of their creators.

Joyce took no part in politics and but rarely, and unwillingly, in political discussion. He was quite likely to yawn through a discussion on, say, Karl Marx's theories and only prick up his ears if Marx's birthday was mentioned, the reason being that his mythology had room for birthdays and no room for theories. As I wrote in *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (Grayson and Grayson): 'An occasional vague reference to the pacific American Anarchist, Tucker, was the only indication I ever heard of a political outlook. His view seemed to be that government is work for the specialist, and the artist, another specialist, had better leave it alone. And then government is, in the last resort, the use of force, whereas the artist's method is persuasion. True, the artist, like the rest of the world, is also a citizen, and laws are made for him to obey and taxes are levied for him to pay. Actively or passively he is a member of the social organization. "Then let it be passively" would express roughly Joyce's attitude.'

However, being non-political is easier said than done. The passive attitude has its active implications which may at times imperatively demand expression. Given the choice, most poets would prefer to make the ballads and let others make the laws, but what if those who make the laws decide to dictate what ballads shall be made? In the present conflict there is no doubt where Joyce's sympathies would lie. He did his best during the 1914-1918 war to further the Allied cause by cultural propaganda in the shape



of his work for the English Players. In my opinion, he would have been still more hostile to the Germany of to-day, with its threat of disaster to his artist's freedom. Religion and politics are nets by which the free soul can fly only if there is no Inquisition in the one and no Gestapo in the other. But one thing is certain: Not all the dictators and Gauleiters of Europe would ever have made him write a line of which his conscience as man or artist disapproved. Writing was to him a religion and the word a sacred material.

Like most of his countrymen he was a born *débrouillard* and humorously proud of it. I well remember his triumph when, on one occasion in Zürich, we started level in an effort to raise the wind, and he passed the post ahead of me with lengths to spare. He willed the end and was not afraid of the means. Whatever arts of seamanship were necessary to bring his precious cargo safely to port he would and did master.

Joyce flew by the nets of religion and Irish oppressed nation politics, and parties and classes meant nothing to him, but there was one social institution that for him was quasi-sacred: the family. Jews irritated him at times and at others bored him, but he admired the Jew as a family man. 'I sometimes think,' he said to me once in Paris, 'that it was a heroic sacrifice on their part when they refused to accept the Christian revelation. Look at them. They are better husbands than we are, better fathers and better sons.' This was further to his assertion that he had put the Jew on the map of European literature. What he thought of them as one oppressed and chosen race against another is best seen in his confrontation of the two-eyed reasonable Jew with the one-eyed Fenian gasbag in Barney Kiernan's saloon. (The Cyclops episode in *Ulysses*.) The last time I saw him in Paris he told me that he had already made it possible for sixteen Jews to find asylum from Nazi persecution in Britain. It has often occurred to me that Joyce's nervous avoidance of all discussion on the government of the city was due to his greater care for the solidarity of the family. How many families have been scattered by the explosive or dissolved by the acid of politics! How much political dispute is but a family quarrel writ large!

Sayings of Joyce that stick do so like sayings of Lincoln—for their horse sense. In my hearing he answered (perhaps for the hundredth time) the question: 'Aren't there enough words for you in the five hundred thousand of the English language?' 'Yes,

there are enough of them, but they are not the right ones.' Rebutting the charge of vulgarity against the use of the pun, he said: 'The Holy Roman Catholic Apostolic Church was built on a pun. It ought to be good enough for me.' And a studied riposte: 'Yes. Some of the means I use are trivial—and some are quadrivial.' August Suter, the Swiss sculptor, met Joyce as he was beginning to write *Finnegans Wake*, and Joyce's description of his enterprise was: 'I am boring through a mountain from two sides. The question is, how to meet in the middle.' There spoke the 'great artificer'.

As a craftsman Joyce was exclusive and stuck to his last, but his appreciations were wide. He had his own contacts with all the arts and a forthright, natural judgment of the products of them uninfluenced by the cant of any æsthetic doctrine. He told me in Zürich that of all artists painters were the freest intelligences; and he didn't say it because he was talking to a painter but because he found it refreshing to talk to people whose job it is to look at things and not through them. Music was the art that lay nearest his own—vocal music in particular. All his friends will remember his Sullivan period. Sullivan (a Parisian Irishman with the massive shoulders and lion muzzle of Jim Larkin, the labour leader) was the greatest tenor since Tamagna, and the world should know it and confess it. The Académie Nationale de la Musique must have blessed Joyce, for he bought tickets for *Guillaume Tell* and gave them to everybody he knew. The least musical of his friends got one. The next day he asked me what I thought of the voice. I told him it reminded me of the Forth Bridge. He took a quick breath, leaned back and disappeared behind his glasses. (He could do this in moments of sudden concentration.) He reappeared and said decisively: 'That's very good, Budgen. But it isn't right. That is not the voice of iron. It is the voice of stone. Stonehenge is the comparison—not the Forth Bridge.'

Guessing at the last months of Joyce's life begets melancholy reflections. War in the Low Countries, the invasion of France, the pitiful torrent of refugees (also exiles), the entry of the Germans into the city he loved, the move southward, sickness, the hurried departure for Zürich. How we feared the worst when we read the word 'Urgent!' But I was thankful it was Zürich. I know how many devoted friends were there to comfort and

sustain Mrs. Joyce. No wonder Joyce could so well dispense with contact with his native land. Ireland herself was ever present at his side.

Soon the snow will be melting on the Zürichberg and Utliberg and falling from dark branches by drip, by drip. The Limmat will quicken her pace to meet her sister Aar. The Föhn wind will blow and the Glarus mountains light up. 'Sechseläuten' is coming. They will soon burn the winter 'Bögg' in the Beltane fire at the lake-side. I shall go to Zürich, if I am alive when this war is over, and I shall take the No. 5 tram up the Züri'berg, and I shall stand before a mound of earth, but I shall not look for Joyce there. I shall hail him across the Bahnhofstrasse as jauntily, shortsightedly, he saunters lakewards. I shall bump into him as with coat collar turned up and coat belt tight he turns a windy corner in Niederdorf. I shall hail him: 'Hullo, there,' as he comes into the Pfauen Café, spectacles gaily glittering and a wisp of *Ulysses* sticking out of his breast pocket to take his place on the other side of a litre of Fendant.

We sat in Joyce's flat in Passy. Review strips of *Finnegans Wake* lay around. I said I thought we had had enough of the story of his rudeness to Yeats. ('You are too old for me to help you.') Joyce affirmed that the story was untrue and went on to instance the many occasions on which he had shown his respect and admiration for Ireland's greatest poet. In Dr. Gogarty's review of his book he thought he could espy admiration for his great feat of endurance. 'Gogarty is an athlete,' he said, 'a cyclist and a swimmer. He should know what staying power is.'

We left the flat together and walked over the bridge to the left bank. Joyce tapped the pavement repeatedly with his new snake-wood stick, a prized acquisition. I told him the only stick I possessed was an olive branch. A suitable companion, he thought. He suggested that I should write an article on *Finnegans Wake* and entitle it *James Joyce's Book of the Dead*. We dawdled citywards. I had a rendezvous at the Dome and Joyce one with Paul Léon. All dawdling in Paris ends in taxis. Joyce set me down at the Dome and waved out of the traffic jam, 'Lots of fun.' Newly initiated I gave the response, 'At *Finnegans Wake*.'

LOUIS MACNEICE

## TRAVELLER'S RETURN

'FROM America no traveller returns', so Mr. Connolly wrote in his Comment in the December number of *Horizon*. Having ignored this apriori truth by landing in this country on December 9th after ten months in the U.S.A., I am surprised to find how many people ask bitterly after those other British writers who are still in America. When people over here talk about these expatriates, more often than not their acrimony equals their ignorance. As an ex-expatriate, therefore, I am about to discuss this subject under a handicap; I have seen it from both sides of the Atlantic.

While I was in America I felt a very long way from Europe, though not so far away as I felt during the autumn of 1939 in Ireland. You cannot forget the War in America (it is the chief subject of conversation), but you cannot visualise it. I could visualise it myself so long as the 'Sitzkrieg' persisted, and during that period I had no wish to return to a Chamberlain's England, where my fellow-writers were sitting around not writing. From June on I wished to return, not because I thought I could be more *useful* in England than in America, but because I wanted to see these things for myself. My chief motive thus being vulgar curiosity, my second motive was no less egotistical: I thought that if I stayed another year out of England I should have to stay out for good, having missed so much history, lost touch.

These two motives of mine seem to me valid for me, but they are not *generally* valid. If an expatriate writer is free from vulgar curiosity and does not wish to keep 'in touch' with England (and such a wish is not a moral axiom), what other reasons are there why he should return? Three possible reasons: (1) Because he could be more useful in England. (2) Because in England he would become a better writer or a better person, or both. (3) Patriotism and/or homesickness.

(1) If an expatriate writer happened, say, to be a highly skilled engineer, he might be more useful to Britain as an engineer than he would be to the U.S.A. or the world as a writer. But none of



the expatriates we are discussing has any such technical qualifications; the only thing they can do particularly well is to write. Would they be useful to Britain to-day *qua* writers? Any more use, that is, than they are while they reside in America? It is more than doubtful. A writer in England now can either sink his gifts in some form of propaganda work, at which he is not necessarily better than Tom, Dick or Harry, or he can continue to survive as a free lance whom no one has time to attend to, or he can give up his profession of writing for the amateurdom of National Service. Usefulness? That is a conception which has never been commensurable with art; even the use of commercial or of propaganda art is hard to assess. Some writers of the Left in England regret that their late colleagues have not returned in order to be flaming torches. But are they, who have stayed over here, doing much flaming themselves? I will return to this point.

(2) The argument that a British-born writer by being in England now would better himself as a writer or as a person, or as both, is a good deal more plausible and may be true for certain individuals. But you cannot generalize. A minority of writers—like Malraux and Hemingway—seem to thrive *qua* writers on scenes of violence and suffering, but none of the British expatriates belongs to this minority. War again brings out in many people certain virtues—notably courage and patience and, to a less degree, generosity—which had not before been apparent, but as these virtues, with the exception of generosity, are not particularly necessary to a writer, a writer, by having them forced upon him, may become in a sense a better person while becoming an inferior, less productive or unproductive artist. If that is so—but again each case must be judged individually—his advance as a person must be balanced against his decline as an artist. On a long term view it is not axiomatic either that war improves everyone—or most people—morally, or that a writer who has become, say, courageous and patient in his life but whose art is lapsing, is in the proper (objective) sense of the word a *better* man than a writer who is not practising courage or patience, but is getting on with his job.

(3) Patriotism or homesickness? Though patriotism includes a sentimental, as it were a family, feeling for place, we can distinguish the ethical motive from the sentimental. At certain times in certain countries there has been a moral urgency to be patriotic when the actual or ideal policy of a man's nation has been a *sine*

*qua non* for his conscience. But to-day patriotism, in so far as it means subordination to a specifically national policy, is superannuated. This war, we assume, is not being fought—not by most of us—for any merely national end; we are fighting it, primarily and clearly, for our lives, and secondarily, and, alas! vaguely, for a new international order. How does this affect the expatriates? They need not at the moment fight for their lives. Will they contribute less to a new international order by living in a country where they are not nationals (a country, by the way, at least no less committed than Great Britain to internationalism)? As for homesickness, if anyone goes home because he is homesick, that is sympathetic, but it is not *ipso facto* a sign of strength; it might be a sign of weakness. Just as Action at All Costs is sometimes a sign of weakness; we have heard of ‘escaping to the Front’.

When I first reached England I was asked if I had read Stephen Spender’s attack on the expatriates. Later I was asked if I had read his defence of them. So I got hold of his *Letter to a Colleague in America* in *The New Statesman and Nation*, of November 16th, which both my questioners referred to. It was not stated *which* colleague he was addressing—and that makes some difference—but I received the impression that Mr. Spender, while carefully conceding that ‘if you can preserve the sense of the “time in London”, then you are in a privileged position’, was in fact suspecting the worst. His letter, especially by contrast with the press-gang attitude of others who have touched this subject, was sensitive, imaginative, and tolerant, but it struck me as inconsistent, indeed, as woolly. He writes: ‘I know *as well as you must do* [*italics mine*] that there is no possibility of running away from a fate which affects the whole world’, but later—and this time the tone implies that ‘I’ know it better than ‘you’ do—he writes that people ‘cannot escape into an entirely new and less disturbing series of events, not even in Hollywood’. As he was writing to someone who was in Hollywood, and as he immediately followed this remark with aspersions on yoga and a ‘philosophy of life’ (presumably of the bogus Southern Californian brand), I took him to mean that his addressee *was* trying to ‘escape’ into an entirely new and less disturbing series of events. Mr. Spender tells me he did not mean this, but there are other people who mean it and say it. And it may be true of *some* of the expatriates that they are trying to put the clock back, but it is a black lie if applied to all of them.

Nor is it true of most Americans though Mr. Spender implies (or doesn't he?—read it for yourself) that the whole country is backward, still living in the days before Munich. We might remember too that there are people also over here—from Colney Hatch to the War Office, from the *Daily Express* to the People's Convention—whose clocks, it seems, have stopped.

Mr. Spender, in his letter, made a great to-do with time and place. 'It is hardly a question,' he writes, 'of *where* you are at all, but *when*,' yet he goes on to subordinate the *when* to the *where*, at least by implication, like this: X, an English writer, is living in America, and America, because of geography, is behind the times, therefore X, *because* he is in America, is also behind the times. 'The only question worth asking,' he goes on, 'about Auden, Isherwood, Heard, Aldous Huxley, MacNeice, etc. [is] not whether they have run away on this particular occasion, but whether they think that there is a chance of escaping from this history altogether.' As Mr. Spender does not answer this question, we cannot say we have been hit. Speaking for myself, I would deny that the possibility of such an escape ever occurred to me. America (I am not speaking of Hollywood, which may be a world to itself) is not a sound-proof room. Nor are Americans politically anæsthetized. If some Americans, like some Englishmen, are still pre-Munich, other Americans, like other Englishmen, were post-Munich before Munich happened. If Mr. Spender *will* use this tricky time-and-place relativism he must avoid even the suggestion of downright generalizations. Anyway, to adopt his relativism for a moment, I suspect him of wishing to repeople England with pre-Munich Audens and Isherwoods. It was only before Munich that this pair attempted the rôle of the Flaming Torch (a rôle, in my opinion, to which neither was very well suited), and it was before Munich that they wrote *On the Frontier*, their last play, their most directly political—and also their worst—work.

'But Auden and Isherwood,' people say, 'were always preaching the fight against Fascism.' So what? I had many conversations with Auden this autumn, and he still is anti-Fascist, but he is no longer in any way a 'fellow traveller'; since getting off that particular train, he had decided—as he told me in March 1939—that it was not his job to be a crusader, that this was a thing everyone must decide for himself, but that, in his opinion, most

writers falsified their work and themselves when they took a direct part in politics, and that the political end itself, however good, could not be much assisted by art or artists so falsified. Auden, that is, had repudiated propaganda.

'Well, he needn't preach or flame, but he ought at least to come back.' Why? The answer too often is jealousy or spite—'If I am under bombs, why the hell shouldn't X be too?' But you can't conduct an argument by means of white feathers or raspberries. War makes people so illogical. *If* you disapprove of the expatriates being in America in wartime, you should have disapproved of their settling there in peace time, you should have made a row when they first took out their papers.

Some people do go so far. It is argued by extremists, most of whom have never crossed the Atlantic, that no Englishman—no English writer anyway—'can' change countries like this; it was all right, perhaps, for Henry James and Eliot to come this way, but no English writer can go that way and get away with it. This looks to me like sheer nonsense. Of course, it is hard to write where you have no 'roots', but because it is hard it may be all the more worth doing. We have had plenty of 'rooted' writing; the individual artist may have soon to dispense with 'roots' (in this narrower, local sense), just as the world must sooner or later dispense with national sovereignty. This question of roots is a question of degree: few of us believe the dichards who think you must stick to your own parish, fewer of us than formerly think that it is good for a small country like Ireland to attempt a cultural autarchy.

This reminds me; I can give myself as an example of uprootability. Born in Ireland of Irish parents, I have never felt properly 'at home' in England, yet I can write here better than in Ireland. In America I feel rather more at home than in England (America has more of Ireland in it), but I am not sure how well I could work if I settled there permanently. If I were sure on this point—as some of the expatriates are sure—it would only have been sensible of me to stay there. Many people in England, the war apart, are astonished that anyone can consider such a migration. Their astonishment is due to that anti-American prejudice which, like the corresponding anti-British prejudice among Americans, is founded on childish misconceptions and leads to a misunderstanding which is not only childish but dangerous. Dangerous



specially now. If the two countries were more pervious to each other, it would not only reinvigorate the culture of both, it would ensure the existence of both. That two or three gifted English writers should be now living in the U.S.A. is at least one kind of much needed *rapprochement*.

In the long run a writer must be judged by what he writes. The British expatriates, with the exception of Isherwood, whose books have always appeared after intervals of apparent inactivity, are still at least writing. Let us look at their more recent publications.

From Los Angeles come *After Many a Summer*, by Aldous Huxley, and *The Creed of Christ*, by Gerald Heard, each of which is a logical development from its author's long-established premises and appears neither better nor worse for his change of domicile. I myself hate the Huxley novel and deplore the Heard *Veltanschauung*, but I cannot see that they would write either better or worse if they moved back to England. And I cannot see that England would gain from the physical presence of either (England can get all they can give by reading their works), whereas they, by returning, might inconvenience both themselves and us; this is no place for either the museum mind or the yogi. But it is good to know that the Heard-Huxley firm can continue in business somewhere.

In New York are Auden, George Barker, Ralph Bates. Barker has not been there long enough to publish a book, but it is probable that poetry of his kind (and it is silly to expect a war to produce mutations of kind) would not develop any better for his being in England; the chief difference is that there he may write more. Barker was never a Flaming Torch, and his sensitive, introspective, romantic, rather woozy talent is not the kind that requires a contact with mud and blood. As far as being 'of use' to his country goes, he will—paradoxically—be of more use to this country when writing as a free lance in America than when he was representing the British Council in a farcical attempt to reserve a cultural liaison with Japan.

Bates, at one time a staunch supporter of the Third International, has settled in the U.S.A. and is continuing to write novels and stories which, apart from their other merits, are valuable social history. 'Well, why can't he do his social history over here? There is lots of opportunity here.' Lots of opportunity for some; you must consider Bates's background. Like many other writers

of the Left, he has had to recant a policy to which he had committed himself wholeheartedly; his recantation was unusually clear-cut and courageous, but any such recantation—as can be seen from a study of ex-Fellow Travellers in England—makes it very difficult to pick up where you left off. Bates is picking up in a country which his own past—his past in England—does not obscure from him; at the same time he is making a sympathetic and intelligent study of another country, Mexico, for which his past—his past in Spain—has equipped him.

Lastly Auden, whom people over here are never tired of backbiting. London is full of silly rumours—Auden has gone yogi, neo-Brahmin, Roman Catholic; it is even alleged that he supported Willkie. The accusations can be summarized under two heads: (1) Auden has got religion; (2) Auden is now just a faddist. (1) This is meant to be damning; it is not recognized, firstly, that the religious sense is something extremely valuable; secondly, that it is something which Auden has always had. What he has done recently is to concentrate and control this sense, to divorce it from what is merely private or ephemeral. (2) Auden, in a sense, has always been a faddist, and seems less of one now than formerly; in any case his fads are not the result of Americanism. While in America he has written two books of poetry—*Another Time* and *The Double Man*. These books have their faults and lack some of the attractions of some of his earlier poems, but they are *not*, even if critics can be found to say so, reactionary or escapist or stagnating. They might be described as transitional; Auden has purged his world-view of certain ready-made, second-hand oversimplifications and is now attempting a new synthesis of his material. Considering the range of his material and considering how many writers have dropped all suggestion of synthesis, this is an attempt for which we should all be grateful.

For the expatriate there is no Categorical Imperative bidding him return—or stay. Auden, for example, working eight hours a day in New York, is getting somewhere; it might well be 'wrong' for him to return. For another artist who felt he was getting nowhere it might be 'right' to return. In my own case, if I had stayed in America I do not suppose I should have felt morally guilty though I might have felt *instinctively* so; not being on the track of a synthesis and being more attached to things than to ideas I might have felt I was only marking time in America (whereas artists c

he opposite kind might be only marking time in England; war, after all, is monotonous, hostile to thought). Actually both my pleasure at being back and my regret, if I had not come, are equally unethical. Those who think it would have been selfish and irresponsible of me to stay in America might be interested to know that their opposite numbers in America thought it selfish and irresponsible of me to return to Europe. And they and their opposite numbers are both fools. The expatriates do not need anybody else to act as their *ersatz* conscience: they have consciences of their own and the last word must be said by their own instinct as artists.

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## WAR SYMPOSIUM—I

INEZ HOLDEN

# FELLOW TRAVELLERS IN FACTORY

YESTERDAY I just missed a "workman's". Of course you can't do nothing if you miss a workman's, can you?' The girl with the Zazu Pitts voice sat next to me in the instructional factory. It was the time of the mid-day meal and she talked about the workman's rams which run before half-past seven in the morning and are a penny cheaper than the others. 'I paid twopence this morning. That's funny, I wonder 'ow I came to pay twopence for a workman's. That's not right, is it? Fancy me paying twopence for a workman's!' The Zazu Pitts voice droned on, but without the coordinated movement of the Zazu hands, they lay lifeless on the table like unsold fish on a fishmonger's slab in late evening.

This girl had stood three in front of me this morning when we had queued up for Friday pay. There had been two or three tears in her eyes then, but she had wiped them away with a small check cotton handkerchief.

'They tell me I can get a job at Rugby when I've finished 'ere. Don't want to go to Rugby, don't know no one at Rugby. Still,

it's better than being out of work. Anything's better than being out of work, isn't it dear?' After this she went away, carrying with her the two empty plates, which she had to take back to that kind of counter in an ante-room where the workers queued up for dinner.

Another girl came in carrying her two plates, mutton on one, rice and custard on the other; she put them down next to me on the long table that centred the lecture hall. Then she went over to the platform, at the far end of the room, where a very small radio perched up on a table gave out a terrific amount of noise and looked as ill-balanced in this vast importance as a seagull on a statue's head. The factory girl took knife, fork and spoon from one of the knife boxes, and bringing them back, triangled them on the table before settling down to her two-plate meal.

She said, 'I was sorry for that lady what was crying,' and went straight into explanations. It was the story of a spanner spoilt in the furnace, this had meant going again through the whole regime of filing, measuring, hack-sawing and drilling for the sake of an elementary exercise in engineering. As for the second spanner, 'Well, it wasn't too good either, 'er bloke did pass it, but it's awful when you feel you're not getting on right with yer work.' 'Course 'er bloke's not like ours, 'e's all right, but when 'e tells them something 'e expects them to get on with it. Now our bloke's different. You can ask 'im anything. We're always asking 'im things aren't we, dear?'

The factory worker opposite said now, 'The sooner I get a good job and pay something into the family exchequer, the better.'

The brute music which had been blaring forth from the radio ceased suddenly. An orchestra began to play a Beethoven symphony. At the first notes the girl next to me turned round quickly sharp. 'Wot a noreful noise.' A wave of nervousness swept over me, since eight I had been hearing the workshop sound of machinery and hack-saws like pennies purposely scratched against slates, the dining hall noise of some band hot hammering, and the toned-down talk about twopenny bus and tram fares. Perhaps to the factory worker who sat next to me now, everything seemed an awful noise that did not work in discord with the daily economic strain.

A girl called May came in, followed by another who stepped sturdily after her, a silent bodyguard yes-girl. May had been in



my workshop but had left a few days ago. She came from a labour exchange to tell us about the job she had been offered.

'What sort of money, dear?'

'Thirty-five shillings a week, and three shillings bonus.'

'That's not very good money for all them long hours, is it?'

'May was one of the best workers here, you know, she was, really.'

The talk went on and around me, the inadequate wage offer was taken as a joke, but May was not taking the job. She was waiting for some better work to come her way. I watched her as she talked, the mobility of expression on her face, the exquisitely timed gestures of her hands. 'E says, and I says,' backwards and forwards, as if over a net, like a Walt Disney hare playing tennis.

The tall girl wearing the mauve handkerchief round her head who had spent so many months in hospital, suffering from loss of weight, said to the dark woman near her, 'Come along, May. It's time to get back to work.' I said, 'I thought the girl who'd been offered the job was May?' and got back the answer, 'So she is, dear, they're both May.'

In the workshop the four files, hack-saw, piece of metal clamped into a vice, ruler, hammer, try-gauge and blue print, have a friendly, familiar look. Once I heard a man in a hospital ward, who had been wheeled back from the X-ray room, say, as he was lifted into bed, 'Well, anyhow it's nice to be home again.' Even though two-thirds of my time are free from the factory, the various objects arranged within this small space, where I work, make a deep memory dent in my mind.

An air raid warning bell rings in each workshop, but it is the rule to go on working unless the bell continues ringing. This is the roof-spotter's signal that enemy planes are directly overhead, then the workers walk in single file down to the basement.

During the ten minutes I was in the basement I heard the talk of 'Billie', who came here after many years' work in a garage. She is the only woman in the factory who wears dungarees instead of a Government overall, the only one wearing a sailor-like beret at the back of her close-cropped head, the other women tie bright coloured handkerchiefs, scarves and turbans round their hair to keep it safely away from the machinery. Billie was like a male impersonator in a non-stop music-hall, she leant against the wall, one foot crossed over the other.

'er bloke's nice, 'e's a regular gentleman.'

One of the women answered, 'I like a bloke like that.'

'Not me, I can't stand them.'

Billie was back in the talk. 'You should see 'er bloke when 'e sees me coming to talk to 'er, 'e goes grrrrrrr—like that—and 'e picks up the bloody spanner. 'e thinks I'm going to waste 'er time with my conversation, see?'

At first I had supposed these 'blokes' to be lovers, husbands, young men, boy friends, and such like, but by now I had learnt that they were the white-coated foremen instructors.

When I returned to the workshop on this afternoon, there was the curious incident of the notice pinned to our bloke's back.

Apparently our bloke had, in his good-natured way, told two of the factory girls that they had no brains. 'Just because we got something measured up wrong.' While we were in the basement the youngest birdlike worker was writing on a piece of exercise paper, pencilling out in large block letters 'I am full of brains', afterwards she changed this to 'Smile nicely when you talk to me.'

Back in the workshop birdlike worker chirped up to our bloke, with some question about her work, while dark-skinned May, with safety-pin in hand, fastened the pencilled paper to his white-coated back.

The work did not stop, but the laughter started, the girls' giggles trebled on through the main accompaniment of files, drills, hack-saws and hammers. The instructor said, 'What is this, what's wrong?' But the birdlike twittering went on. He put his hand behind his back, took off the notice, read it and threw it into a cardboard box of unwanted metal and wood. He walked up to sparrow chirper. 'Well, fancy making a fool of me like that in front of the whole room,' he said in his good-natured way. 'How does your conscience feel?' She blushed. So ended this naive incident. There must be many such in any girls' school.

It was about this time that I began to feel rather isolated, as if I could not be easily enough, or often enough, amused: probably this came from tiredness. I thought about the effect of factory life on the pampered bourgeois, or even sometimes pampered bourgeois such as myself.

The longer a war goes on, the sooner monotony, boredom and discontent of discomfort seeps into the spirits of individuals.

Perhaps the image of the main outline of the war gets a bit blurred and other ideological wars are set up in the mind.

In the Great War there were, perhaps, soldiers who came to think that the battle might well be between everyone at the front against everyone at home. To-day I thought there should also be a sort of war between everyone who stayed at home and worked against everyone who got away into safe or sunny areas. Besides this, there was a second small guerrilla warfare to be waged against the bourgeois pink political talkers who fight armchair class-battles with left wings folded so securely over upholstered plush elbow rests.

On the faces of many of the workers around me I see that strange grey tough-grime, the same look I have seen so often when workers' trains have passed my own, journeying late homewards to London. Behind the fatigue there is the Endurance, as if whining had been silenced before speech started. Here there is a great strength, unorganized, but strength all the same.

The two or three bourgeois factory workers suffer in a separate way, it is not easy for them to get up at six o'clock, to set out in dark, cold and air raid for the factory where they must work until the evening, wash in rough soap, and wait in three queues to fetch their food from counters. Perhaps in civilian life they knew long periods of poverty, missing out meals and being troubled about debts, but for them poverty passes over, and at almost all times there is warmth at will and cordiality within reach. The Proletarian workers' problem is more prolonged, an unending night of never enough money—the horizon they see ahead is probably of the same dreary dust as the semi-quicksand they stand on now. So it seemed to me in the factory: the workers were often talking about money in a very small way, the bus fares, the price of food, and all the rest of it. But when one of the factory girls had a coat stolen, they realized at once her disaster and they all contributed something from their wages so that she could buy herself a new one, against the cold walk home.

During the ten-minute teatime a girl near me said, 'May I take the liberty of opening your newspaper?' The one opposite said, 'Why not try bringing one of your own in for a change?' A hundred times a day I see signs of awareness of the percentage of living-costs. Even a penny newspaper represents a part of this. The long sickness of economic difficulty gets on the workers'

nerves, blinding them by poverty as the privileged classes are blinded by egoism.

The preoccupation of poverty blunts perception, but here in the factory there is also the counter-poetry of comradeship and generosity.

Near me a woman was talking about the difficulty of getting home at night after work. 'I got caught up larst night with an old 'un, wot 'ad lorst 'er way; she wasted my time terrible, artful old cat she wos; I 'ad to let 'er come along o' me; I put 'er on the bus at larst, I didn't like to leave the pore old soul, artful old cat she wos all the same.' This conversation with its old man of the sea rhythm acted on my mind like a lullaby. I sleep-walked back towards the workshop, taking my empty teacup to the food counter. Some workers were still queueing up for tea, one of them got halfway down the line, but another shouted out, 'Now then, shirker, back into the queue.'

In the workshop a girl who had started work a few days ago said to me, 'ow are you getting on, I can't seem to do nothink right.' She wriggled. 'My brassière ain't 'arf tight, I can't seem to do nothink right.'

At the end of the room there is a kind of caged-in enclosure where the files, hammers, copperplates and various try-gauges are kept. It looks like a two-dimensional concentration camp in a cardboard film set. The white-coated supervisor who works there came out and walked down the shop. Some of the workers were talking of the air raid of the evening before. He said, 'It was so strange last night, with the guns muffled, the snow everywhere, and the stillness, in a way it was beautiful.'

## WAR SYMPOSIUM—II

ALUN LEWIS

# THE LAST INSPECTION

EVERYTHING was O.K. in the loco sheds. A couple of sappers were running the shed doors up, the grey rainy half-light swirled into the dusk of the sheds, lapping against the glittering green engines and the braziers of burning coal where the fitters were working on a broken-down shunter, everything was O.K. Old



Baden-Powell, an L.N.E.R. 1910 box engine detailed for the day's special job, hissed and screamed fierce clouds of steam, while the driver and fireman just touched her up with big swabs of cotton waste, and a fitter with a flare lamp squeezed a last drop of oil into her couplings.

December 31st, and the Brigadier ready to start his last tour of inspection before retiring with the old year. He had retired once before, but when war began he came forward in the same spirit of service as the rest of us to help the nation in her war effort. He wore his medals as a professor his books, and he walked slowly just to be on the safe side. He was going to see everything to-day, for himself. It's only natural when you're retiring, you want to see for yourself whether any work has been done during your tenure of office, how things have been getting along as it were; because when you're at the helm you haven't any time to go dashing into the stokehold to supervise the trimmers, have you? You even have to rely on the word of your mate that the anchor has actually been raised.

The sergeants in the sheds were arguing about beagles. One said beagles only hunted hares. Another said that was wrong, because there was a pack of beagles at Woolwich Arsenal, and they didn't hunt hares because there weren't any hares left in London. Another one said beagles didn't hunt hares anyway; down his way they used 'lurchers' for hares, mostly on a Thursday. There were a lot of sergeants in the shed. Nobody knew what half of them were doing.

Fred Tube was driving old 'B.P.' He was a driver on the London to Brighton line in civvy street, cool as a cucumber at seventy an hour.

Morgan Evans was firing her. He had a boil on his neck and he was browned off. He chucked his cotton waste away and sat on a packing case and yawned.

'Have a fag, Mogg?' Freddy said, finishing wiping the oil off the scrubbed footplate.

'No thanks,' Mogg said, yawning again. 'I've chucked smoking. Somebody's got to lead a clean life, even if the missus won't.'

'It's cold these mornings,' said Fred. 'I'm wearing my long pants.'

'Too thick for me,' Mogg said. 'I've sent mine to my old man. He's warm, even if the old lady isn't.'

'What are they? Pensioners?'

Mogg nodded.

The R.S.M. came out of the loco office, resplendent in Sam Browne and brown shoes, looking most important.

'Get her out of the sheds, Tube,' he said. 'Come on, Evans. What are you lounging about for? None of your Bolshie way here. Get cracking. Waken your ideas up. And remember, both of you, don't jar her when you brake. Brake her gradually. There's a dining-car on her to-day. If you tip any of the dishes you'll be on a charge for careless driving. And I'll see to it you get no mercy. Get cracking.'

'Yes, miss,' Mogg muttered, swinging himself on to the foot-plate.

They pulled out of the sheds, picked up the two posh carriages that had been waiting for fifteen years in the carriage sheds for this supreme occasion, the diner and the saloon, comfortable as upstairs in the pictures, smelling of carbolic and Jeyes and the simmerings of lunch, and rolled along to the regulating station to pick up the party.

They were all waiting, the colonels and captains turned out like new pins by their batmen, the women in sables and astrakhan with little veils on their hats and silk stockings showing right up to their knees. And in the middle of them, exquisitely invested in a brass hat with a lovely red band round it, the Brigadier. Beside him his daughter, a blonde whom the boys called Unity, and beside her, at a decent interval, her fiancé, a dark thick moustache and a cap pulled down over his nose. He was only a second lieutenant, and he wouldn't have been allowed to come if he hadn't got engaged to Miss Unity, so he got engaged. He was due for a couple more pips now, no doubt. Leave it to Unity, as the boys said; it was a kind of slogan in the camp—when the latrines wanted cleaning and that.

And off they all went.

There was a lot of things to inspect. The camp area was several miles square, and the military line wound about like an undecided snake from barracks to barracks, from construction yards to stores depots, from ordnance dump to M.T. park. And at every station a guard of honour stood on the cinders that made the platform and slapped their rifles when the sergeant yelled 'Pree Zent—AMMS,' and the whole party piled out and the Brigadier saluted

and inspected the guards' buttons and the whole party piled back again and Freddy Tube said: 'Up, Nelly!' and off they went.

During the last twenty years they had been trying to make the two ends of the railway meet by constructing a loop at each end which was to meet in the middle at a point among the gorse and scrub which was marked X on the big chart in the Brigadier's office. But one thing and another had prevented the completion of the task during peace time. There was no real urgency in peace time. Now things were different. National emergency, supreme effort. When the Brigadier came out of retirement to answer the call he said: 'The line *must* be completed. Immediately.' It would show he realized the gravity of the situation. But the line hadn't been completed, although he had spent many week-ends in London—before the Blitz—in trying to get the War Office to allocate him sufficient construction stores. Meantime, the work gangs went out to the job every day and did what they could. In winter it was rough on them because they couldn't keep warm without working, but in summer it was O.K. Anyway, the Brigadier was looking forward to seeing how much they had done. It was *his* line, his monument.

But first, lunch.

Freddy drew her into the siding and he and Mogg sat on a lump of coal each and ate the huge bully beef sandwich they'd drawn from the cookhouse before coming to work.

The diner was next to the engine. Mogg went for a stroll along the line to hear what they were eating.

Lunch was scheduled to take an hour and a quarter. Then the party was to transfer to a little open internal-combustion car which would run them along the new loop line as far as it went. But it was cold and morbid out, and (damn it all!) it began to drizzle a bit; the windows of the diner were wet with drizzle outside and with condensing heat inside; and lunch took longer than they expected. You can't knock such good red wine and old Scotch back in a hurry, it's a crime, and when a fellow is retiring like that, well, it's a shame to gabble the speeches off and hurry off and get wet and catch a cold as like as not. So they cancelled the inspection of the new line. With regret. Mogg and Freddy were sorry, too, for one of their mates was waiting on the party and he'd promised to save them a bottle of Scotch and some fowl which they'd be able to eat when the party was off down the line.

And the sergeant in charge of the work gangs was sorry, too, for he'd gone to the trouble of indenting for eighty pairs of gum boots for the men and getting the men to wear them for the day. And now he'd have all the trouble of collecting them at evening and returning them to Brigade Stores without the compensating pleasure of the Brigadier remarking on how well equipped the men were.

But there you are. An order is an order.

Mogg enjoyed listening under the windows in a hungry sort of way. There were four speeches, three by colonels about the Brigadier, and one by the Brigadier about the three colonels. And then there were four toasts. 'The Brigadier.' 'The Ladies.' 'The Army.' And, of course, 'The King.'

Then the Brigadier said he had one last toast to propose.

Silence in the diner.

'To Victory!' he said.

'To Victory!' they all replied.

Mogg strolled back to the footplate where Freddy was dozing by the fire.

'The war's nearly over,' said Mogg, grinning sulkily. 'We've dug for Victory and saved for Victory. And now they're drinking for it.'

'D'you think there'll be any left for us?' Fred said.

Then a waiter came along with two glasses of whisky on a tray marked 'Players, Please'.

'From the old man,' he said.

'Hacha!' said Fred, grabbing a glass. 'Come on, Mogg, this'll warm you up.'

Mogg took his glass.

'To the old man,' said Freddy.

'To his successor,' said Mogg. 'Let's hope he knows there's a war on.'

'Now, then, none of that Bolshie talk,' said Freddy, savouring the drink on his tongue. 'You don't know no more about it than the old man. So drink his whisky in a Christian spirit.'

'Who said it's his whisky?' said Mogg, sticking to his guns.

Then the R.S.M. came along and told them to get cracking.

And did old Baden-Powell make a dash for home?



He was in the sheds, cooling down, before you could look round.

'And I didn't jar the brakes, neither,' said Freddy, the master craftsman, patting the antediluvian tank.

'There's a telegram in the office for you, Fred,' somebody said.

'Oh Christ,' said Fred, turning grey at the thought of his wife and kids in Shoreditch. 'Oh Christ! Oh Christ!'

Mogg took his arm, gently.

ARTHUR CALDER-MARSHALL

## INTRODUCING COSTALS

'My dear brother-writer, Pierre Costals, devil take him!'

H. DE MONTHERLANT

It is possible to be a great novelist without creating a single character who steps from the pages of fiction into independent life. Writers as diverse as Fielding and D. H. Lawrence remain masters of their creatures. Mrs. Woolf will always be better known than Mrs. Dalloway.

Yet sometimes characters in fiction are delivered from their creators and live on their own. Don Quixote is more alive than Cervantes mouldering in Mantua. Oblomov outfames Goncharov, Dracula the unfortunate Bram Stoker.

My reason for heading this study with the name of Costals is that de Montherlant, in *Pity for Women* and *The Lepers*, created a character of this type. Pierre Costals is weaned of his author and lives by his own processes. It is idle to discuss whether Costals resembles his creator, as nugatory to seek his explanation in the circumstance of his genesis as interpret a live man's character by analysis of his parents on the night of conception. Costals is headed for a career of his own. His prospect of fame is independent of his author, whatever de Montherlant may have written in the past or may write in the future. It remains only to be seen whether the abstract coined from his name will be psycho-philosophical like Marx or Masochism or Costalitis, a psycho-physiological disorder.

Later critics can discuss Costals, decide whether he is psychopathic or a sage, how far his view of sex-relations fits the truth or is warped to his nature. Costals is reticent about politics, his the indifferent shrug of the politician-wary. His preoccupations are women and work. Optative Ph.D.s may explore his unwillingness to endorse any aspect of the society in which he lives, while accepting every benefit he may receive from it. And finally, those who prefer nomenclature to thought may decide whether he is a cryptofascist, a latterday romantic imperialist, or an old-fashioned artist for art's sake.

Such criticism is out of place in this introduction. We all know the embarrassment caused by those who introduce a friend and immediately draw us aside to detail his faults, virtues and obsessional neuroses. We need time to become interested in the man himself before we care whether he suffers from paranoia, an Oedipus complex, or psychological hæmorrhoids.

Costals is a writer in his middle thirties, well known to the public, yet too good to be a member of the Académie Française, a popular broadcaster and successful journalist, sufficiently rich—or modest enough in his tastes—to do anything he pleases. As a young man, he went to North Africa to observe the fighting. The Arab world has remained in his imagination the reverse of France, the symbol of man-domination, of the male mind and the male organ functioning in their separate spheres. It provides the antithesis to his public, women-complicated life of France.

Work is the main preoccupation of his life, work and the contemporary and posthumous fame which good work brings. Women provide relaxation from and stimulus to work. He is not greatly interested in the social struggles convulsing the world round him. He views them with amused impotence. His fellow men, the questing ants pursuing their devious ways about the heap, are tedious in the mass. He does not seek rhyme or reason in their bewildering itineraries. Introspection and exploration of those few with whom he is intimate show him the world, like the contents of a room gathered within the circumference of a tiny mirror.

The mind for such work must be a scalpel, rather than a sledge-hammer, the focus of the brain so fine that every detail is distinct. Costals is abnormally gifted with the quality which he calls clear-sightedness.

'My clearsightedness frightens other people but it does not frighten me. I am amused by it. It is a monster I have tamed. Yet why "a monster"? Let us say rather that it is my tutelary genius. It is thanks to that clearsightedness that I lead a perfectly intelligent life, doing only what I know I can do, and concentrating on that, never straying, not losing my time, not being taken in by others or by myself, never letting people cause me suffering and even being put out by them rarely. And as I join all the powers of imagination and poetry to that clearsightedness I rediscover the domain of dream through poetry and through imagination the feelings of men who are not clearsighted—which allows of my giving set vacations to my clearsightedness when I wish, and consider it good to do so.'

I would like you to re-read this passage, because it is deceptive. Its rhetorical form appears at first sight cumulative, whereas it is definitive. The loose construction conceals the precision of its thought, which only becomes fully significant when pondered phrase by phrase.

It states the philosophy of a very intelligent egoist, so determined to be free that he will not even be bound by doctrinaire egoism. It propounds an ethical principle which cannot be universalized. But Costals, who is no Kantian, has no wish to see it universalized. If the earth moves in its orbit round the sun, does any principle of reciprocity demand that the sun should move round the earth? Costals sees no reason to do unto others as he would they should do unto him, since that implies not only a human equality of rights but also a similarity of temperament, the existence of which is neither certain nor desirable. From the women he encounters he demands not independence, but subservience. Love is not the attraction of polarities, but an extending of the personality. To Solange Dandillot in a moment of outspoken clearsightedness, he remarks:

'I want you to be, as it were, a *check* to me. *Checks* are those Arab scarves that one can fold all sorts of ways, that can be turned into anything one wishes, and the Arabs don't limit themselves, I promise you! Sometimes they're a scarf, then a hat, or a towel, cord, veil, filter, bag, flychaser, belt, handkerchief, underdrawers or pillow. I have not raised you to myself to be other than myself.

I want you to be me, that and only that. So that I may never doubt you. So that I may never tire of you.'

Costals has a son, Brunet, whom he took from his mother at birth. He loves Brunet more deeply than anyone except himself; and so he, and he alone, must be responsible for Brunet's education and upbringing. When he is with the boy, the conflict which never leaves him in adult relationships is resolved. His mind in the company of men and women is as agile and irreverent as a jumping cracker in a chapter meeting. But with the boy he reveals his tenderness and disposition for play. (He plays with adults, of course, but more like a cat with a mouse.)

He does not usurp the boy, nor neglect him. Times are allotted for Brunet; and his education and happiness are considered with great seriousness. Costals is the reverse of a journalist, like Paul de Kruif, who will find in scientific experiments a glamorous adventure. Costals invests his most irresponsible adventures with the dignity of experiments. Brunet is his greatest experiment, to bring a boy up without the influence of women.

Even after his engagement to Solange, Costals hides the existence of Brunet from her. But once he speaks of him, under cover of a hypothesis, revealing his ambitions the more openly for that reason.

'If I had a son . . . I should strive passionately to make him . . . like me, towards and against everyone. . . . And his moral standards would be my moral standards,—towards and against everyone.'

The jerkiness of his speech reveals the profundity of his feeling. His love for Brunet, the most tender and straightforward of his emotions, is his most egotistical. Brunet's purpose is to perpetuate Costals, *ersatz* for longevity. This is why he must be kept free from the contamination of women.

And yet Costals himself was brought up by a woman. His moral standards were formed in part through contact with his mother, who succeeded in so implanting herself in his imagination that he excepts her from his scathing judgements on her sex. She is a woman without a peer.

Professor Freud would have been interested by Costals. For that lover of women did not seek his mother's image in the



women he met. He took over the functions of mother himself. Costals, the dominant male, is also the matriarch.

One must distinguish between the 'dominant male principle' as enunciated by D. H. Lawrence and as enunciated by Costals (even though 'overemphasis' in each case may have been due to innate femininity). Lawrence based his argument primarily on sexual mastery, Costals on intellectual, cultural and emotional superiority. The 'purdah' system enraged Lawrence but delighted Costals.

It is out of place to discuss here how far Lawrence's advocacy of primitive nations was the defence of himself in generalized terms. But certainly Costals' championship of men against women is due to the accident of his birth. In his relations with women, his egoism is camouflaged as male superiority. His own pride is the pride in his sex. His ideas of the relation of the sexes are not borne out in France, and so North Africa is his ideal. He rejects philosophically 'the West, dominated by women', with its 'cult of suffering', in favour of 'the cult of wisdom' in 'the East, where man is master'.

Costals is right to claim clear-sightedness. But clear sight does not mean clear purpose. If it did, if Costals were a man without conflict, he would have migrated to North Africa, to become a modern Doughty or Algerian Hester Stanhope. But with all his cult of the East, he remains a Westerner. He has an Arab mistress, Rhadidja, the perfection of voluptuous obedience, of silent, uncerebral acceptance. She is perfect for the bed and the unobtrusiveness of working hours. But she does not arouse conflict in him, and he lives by conflict. An Arab home and wife, Costals might have prayed as Saint Augustine for Heaven, with the same afterthought, 'but not yet'.

All philosophies, whether true or false, are rationalizations of emotional attitudes and experience. Costals' is no exception. His conclusions are drawn from previous experience. Beliefs about men and women, Christianity and Moslemism, are formulated. But life is not modified in the light of these beliefs: it is merely lived to reaffirm them. The epitaph for an incident is 'How right I was', not 'Where from here?'

The seven hundred pages of de Montherlant's opus is mainly the story of Costals' relationship with two women, Andrée Hacquebaut and Solange Dandillot. Andrée is an intellectual, living in the provinces, intelligent, passionate, but plain, Samuel

Butler's Miss Savage in her late twenties. She has met Costals through his books and written him a fan-letter, which is the beginning of a long correspondence. She loves him first as a writer, and only secondly as a man. 'You speak,' she writes, 'and it is myself I hear.' She recognizes a kinship between herself and him, and he becomes her mouthpiece: to such an extent, that in the later stages of their relationship she is unable to read *his* meaning, because her own dominates her whole mind.

Solange, on the other hand, is young, beautiful, shrewd but unintellectual, the daughter of a rich bourgeois. She has neither understanding nor love of his work. 'I should love him as much if he were a wholesale grocer. And then he'd have less women hanging around. . . .'

Three other women occur as Costals' lovers in the book: Rhadidja, the Moorish mistress, already mentioned, Thérèse Pantevin, a convent girl torn between love of God and love of Costals' image, material for a religious experiment by Costals, which ends in her suicide, and Rachel Guigui, his Jewish mistress in Paris, a modern *hetaira*, intelligent, sympathetic and undemanding.

I have no space in which to delineate the characters of these women, as they are set forth in their complexities. Enough that for Costals, Andrée and Solange stand respectively for intellect and beauty, Thérèse for religion, Rhadidja for passion and Guigui for companionship.

Though Andrée and Solange are so different, they both capitulate to Costals in the same way; because they are both subjected to the same siege. Costal does not lay siege to virtue, the physical blockade which fascinated Richardson, but to pride and individuality, the war against the spirit. To take a maidenhead is as easy as picking primroses in spring. But to bend a woman to one's will, use every artifice of intellect and intuition to destroy her self-respect, change her from the pursued to the pursuer, become freer of her the more bound she is, dictate the length of time she may stay, how many times a month ring up, is a true proof of power.

The main theme of the opus is the reduction of these two different women to a similar lack of self-respect.

' . . . Costals . . . saw . . . Solange being metamorphosed into Andrée Hacquebaut. That girl, once so reserved that she never

telephoned first! The same frenzy to "scrabble" at your trouser legs to get the bit of sugar, the same fury not to see what hits you in the eye, the same fury to cling, the same thickheaded trust, and the same pointless wiles: the same masterpiece of useless determination.

Yet so simple an experiment on two women would be diabolically cruel. In all his relations with women, there is a strong element of sadism; a hatred of women that finds expression not in the whip and spurs, but in spiritual flagellation. To exist, this must have an idealistic counterpart: Costals would be an object of pathetic contempt if he took unadulterated pleasure in the degradation of his women. His malicious wit redeems him; his sensitive impertinence prevents him from being dismissed as morbid. His idealism canonises his brutality. It is not delight that he feels in Solange's collapse, but disappointment (and relief):

'The truth burst: all women were Andrée Hacquebaut. Andrée loomed up like a sort of gigantic idol—larger than life—like the Athene of Phidias, and, like her, terrifying, grandiose and ridiculous, compounded of the whole sex, of millions and millions of females who had hurled themselves into it, and now came forth with their different faces. Andrée was *Woman*.'

So generalized, the experience with Andrée and Solange is bereft of guilt. Not Costals, but all women were at fault. As for those men who were married and liked it, well, 'the weak of will and the simple-minded will always congratulate themselves on their marriages. But remember this too: those who defend marriage most strenuously in words, are often those who suffer most from it. They feign to be ecstatically happy, for fear of being seen through and pitied.'

On marriage, Costals has views as definite, and contradictory, as those on women. He believes that marriage means death to the creativeness of an artist. So what? So keep a mistress or succession of mistresses? That is no more his solution than retirement to the East, 'where man is master'. He is like a fly that has once alighted on the sticky sweet paper but must come back again just to sample—yet always with the escape planned from what will still mean death. In dallying with the idea of marrying Solange, Costals must devise his getaway before his get-in. It is characteristic of his

attitude to women. Even in the early days with the girl, he noted her features, which did not please him as 'emergency exits from a hall, through which in case of necessity one could escape, or like the more equivocal clauses in a contract. It was those large ears and that rather heavy chin that would permit him to leave her with a light heart.'

So in approaching marriage, the release from the contract was even more important than its conclusion. What were the grounds for divorce?

'Suppose the husband were to forbid the mother-in-law to visit them' (Costals asked Mme Dandillot in one of his many interviews about the marriage), 'Would that, too, be grounds for automatic divorce?'

'Well, my dear sir, if you've got to that point already!'

'Should one not always be prepared for the worst?'

'I've never known a marriage taking place under such conditions,' cried Mme Dandillot, though without animosity, having reached a point where she could only just keep afloat.

'It's you who desire this marriage, not me,' said Costals somewhat dryly.

'My dear sir, if you find the marriage really such a cross to bear. . . .'

'No, no,' said Costals, looking at the floor. 'I only want you to realise your responsibility. . . .'

This hesitancy, the terror of being trapped by what he calls 'the hippogriff' of marriage, is the aspect which Costals keeps before himself and the Dandillots. (And how feminine it is, what a reversal of the dramatic rôle of courtship! Solange the pursuer, Costals the pursued!) But, of course, there is another aspect which the clear-sighted Costals saw from the tail of his eye. His playing with marriage was the carrot dangled before the donkey. Every vacillation, every strategic withdrawal, lured the Dandillots further into country which they did not know. He was conscious of his power.

'Alternating waves of honesty and foxiness, of gravity and farcicality, passed ceaselessly over his face. And, it was true, he felt himself the more mobile of the two, like a mischievous dog



jumping about a sheep with marvellous enjoyment of the worrying it gives it.'

Love affairs are begun in different metaphors, a pick-up, a fling, a plunge, change, adventure. To Costals, each woman posed a rider to his theorem of sex-relations. However obscure the immediate future might be, he knew that one day, when the woman, stripped of her self-respect, became the open pursuer, he could once again write Q.E.D. All his wit and mental agility are directed to that end. His writing draws power from the conflict and in turn aids his resistance. After Solange has left him in Genoa, after he has been closer to her than ever before, he begins to write about her.

'For nine days running he wrote, at the rate of twelve working hours a day. He inked his pen in himself, writing with blood, mud, semen and fire. He cleaned her out, as one mops up a plate, or a silted pond being scraped. He sucked her dry and spewed her up again in his novel. She was far away, and imagined herself safe. But from afar, with his art, he drew off her fluids and depersonalized her as she had drawn off his fluids and depersonalized him by the potency of the boredom that emanated from her. But he doubly depersonalized her, for he scattered her distinguishing features among a number of the characters in his book. She was no longer an individual, she no longer *existed* at all. "Ah, so you wanted to eat up my soul."'

With his passion for personal freedom, Costals only undertakes an obligation when he can see the means of release. Before contemplating marriage, he had to discover grounds for divorce and plan Solange's murder; but at the same time he did not begin to contemplate marriage until his relationship with Solange had reached a point where he could see the end. However he worried about how he should get out of marriage once he was in, he never intended to be married. He just wanted to see how far the Dandillots would go, and found in their complaisance to his most outrageous demands only the confirmation that they were out to trap him at any price. The conflict between marrying and staying single existed within himself, but he only decided to contemplate marriage seriously when he was certain that he would not marry Solange. He treated himself, in fact, as wise parents treat their children during their destructive age, recognizing that the stage

of cutting, tearing and breaking down must be lived through, but providing scissors, waste paper and rags for the experiment. If Costals had met a woman with whom marriage might have been possible, a woman combining the intelligence of Hacquebaut with the beauty of Solange, ['Fancy, never—never—have I found the two things, intelligence and beauty, together in a woman'] would he, one wonders, have fallen? The answer is not in the pages of fiction, but in the imagination of every reader. A woman, fancying herself both beautiful and clever, may imagine his defeat and final subjugation. A man, I believe that he was too wary, that he recognized that his way of life, embodying his conflict, gave him his fullest satisfaction. Happiness and peace of mind lay in struggle and frustration. If he posed a goal, it was not the end he desired but the way that led there. However, the proof of Costals' humanity is that one may argue about him and find no conclusion.

You cannot pin any human being down to his actions, philosophy or dicta, until he is dead. Costals least of all. Such things are not a man's personality, but the shadows it casts on space and time. They are one with the clothes he wears or dishes he chooses from a menu-card. We may deduce the man from his habits, choice and style. But that deduction is an act of imaginative faith.

I have described some characteristics of the man, arcs described about his centre. His dicta are always true, not by the logic of philosophers but the psychologic of his nature. For example, Costals is indifferent to the countryside.

'I don't object to a tree here and there,' he concedes, 'but I feel no need to have a great many of them in front of me. As for the sea and its ridiculous expanses, wrinkled like some elephant's bottom, I refuse to hear about it at any price.'

How right that observation is, not as absolute truth,—for what the sea was to Conrad or Melville!—but for Costals, who had 'more interesting things in himself to think about'.

Yet it is also right that in describing human relationships he should call metaphors of nature to his aid. He finds in his conflict over marriage, 'two contrasted motions, as on the shore, when one wave recedes, another comes gliding in over it, with a contrary motion'. Solange's 'face was white in the darkness, like a glacier at night'. 'Outside the door there were the fresh marks

of her wet shoes in every direction, like those of a tracked-down animal that has stalked up and down there'.

Nature is not ignored. But it is studied for its resemblance to man, rather than its own beauty or interest. Costals could observe that 'the kisses of lovers are like falling turds', never that falling turds are like the kisses of lovers. The external world is mirrored in the microcosm of Costals, his utilitarian test 'What good is this to me?' and not 'What good am I to this?'

But the observation is there. What farmyard contemplation was necessary previous to detecting that Mme Dandillot's mouth pursed like a chicken's bottom or that, as when pleading, she gazed alternately left and right with nervous movements of the hands and lower jaw, she was 'like an old horse moving its underlip!' No, Nature must be laid under the same siege as Andrée and Solange, reduced to the same arbitrary terms.

Nor is the reader himself exempt from the attacks of this infuriating fellow. At one moment you succumb to his charm. How thoughtful and sensitive he can be when he sets out to captivate! But the same brain that can perceive what pleases can equally infuriate. The man is flagrant, monstrous. Really you've had enough! But the moment before satiety, his mood veers, his tactics change and you give him one more chance. You don't notice that by giving you that last concession, he has induced you to concede everything else. Your apparent victory enabled him to consolidate all his previous gains. And so you continue, bullied, fascinated and indignant; and it is not till you are alone that you realize that you, like Andrée and Solange, have been drawn into a personal relationship with that man of strong will, that matriarch, that coquet, and without knowing it, you have been pursuing Costals, trying to catch him, trying to pin him down, but never succeeding.

*Pity for Women.* Henri de Montherlant. Routledge. 1937.

*The Lepers.* Henri de Montherlant. Routledge. 1940.

(NOTE. In the French there are four volumes, *Les Jeunes Filles*, *Pitié pour les Femmes*, *Le Démon du Bien*, and *Les Lèpreuses*. In the first two, Costals appears under the name of Costa, the name being changed in the final volumes owing to the complaint of a real M. Pierre Costa. In the English, Thomas McGreevy translated *Les Jeunes Filles*, and John Rodker the other three books.)

STEPHEN SPENDER

## THE YEAR'S POETRY, 1940

EVER since Matthew Arnold wrote his critical essays, and perhaps since Shelley, poets have suffered from uneasy consciences. In an age when science produces theoreticians who are either specialists or else who disinterestedly invent the means of corrupting the mind and then destroying the fabric of civilization; when the myths of religion seem to have been exploded; when philosophy is an exploration of words corresponding to no known reality; at such a time poetry might step forward, take the place of religion, understand, absorb and criticize science, and create a synthesis in which thought was related to the needs of society and the psychology of individuals, instead of being departmentalized.

The poets, seeing pitfalls opening round them, have protested. A poetic myth which is a description of life based on a hypothetical situation cannot take the place of religion, which is dogmatic. If it did, religion would be without any centre of literal truth, because all poetic myths would have an equal religious value. If you treat the Bible simply as poetry, then all poetry equal æsthetically to the Bible is as true as the Bible. Incidentally, all poets would be promoted to the position of major or minor prophets: a very uncomfortable thought.

Other objections, which have for some years been canvassed by the younger writers, are raised and disputed by the poet as politician. T. S. Eliot protests both against the substitution of poetry for religion, and against Shelley's conception of poets as the 'unacknowledged legislators of mankind'. Nevertheless, his view that poetry is merely a highly organized form of intellectual amusement does not really dispose of the issues, any more than it would to say that poetry was just a pattern of words.

Of course, there are various kinds of poetry, and one must avoid saying that poetry must do this or that. Yet the fact remains that one kind, and perhaps the most enduring kind, of poetry has been a particular use of language to describe the situation of that part of humanity which happens to be living at a particular time, struggling with the circumstances of its environment. The first



essential of this kind of poetry is a somewhat naive consciousness of being alive; naive, because this sense of being alive is kept separate from the actual circumstances of living, which are regarded partly as an expression of being alive, partly as an impediment to a full awareness of it. A poet is a person who is conscious of the possibility of living at any time, because he isolates the sense of living from the sense of environment. This means also that he is specially aware of the conflict with his environment, because he is always trying to alter, or perhaps even accept, his environment by interpreting it into terms of a more general and less transitory continuity of existence.

Poetry, then, cannot evade the responsibility of interpreting the significance of life at a particular time and relating it to life at other times. The poetry of the past is a very freshly preserved record of the reactions of men who were alive in the same way as we are to sets of circumstances different from ours. How different? They can tell us only if we can also tell them. We have to establish our own value in relation to theirs. We rapidly lose the significance of life in the past if we lose it in the present.

The problem that confronts poets—and, indeed, everyone who is aware and alive—is that external circumstances may arise which destroy the continuity of life sensed by poetry. If it is conceded that this is possible—that the destruction of the values of living, and their supersession by machinery, aims of power, and materialism, might make life meaningless—is the poet justified in stepping out of his poetry, as it were, and taking a hand in altering the world? Is he justified in using poetry as a means of propaganda for traditional values which may, in fact, be revolutionary?

Most contemporary poets seem to have been faced by these questions. Some have replied by abandoning poetry altogether and joining revolutionary movements. Those who have continued to write poetry have often been forced to use their poetry as an affirmation of values rather than as an interpretation of values which they find generally recognized by society.

Eliot is a case in point. As I have indicated, he has protested in his criticism against the suggestion that the poet is concerned with aims outside poetry. Nevertheless, his recent poetry, especially *Burnt Norton* and *East Coker*, shows a tendency to move outside itself and question its own use. After a passage in a dancing measure, he writes, in *East Coker*:

‘That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory:  
 A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,  
 Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle  
 With words and meanings. The poetry does not matter.  
 It was not (to start again) what one had expected.  
 What was to be the value of the long looked forward to,  
 Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity  
 And the wisdom of age?’

*East Coker* lacks, perhaps, some of the essentially poetic merits of Eliot's earlier poetry. If one can say it is a successful poem without being completely poetic, this is not really a contradiction, for it is a poem whose aim is not entirely poetry. What the poem does is to re-create an experience; and this experience lies outside the poetry, within religion and philosophy; that is to say, it could be created by other than poetic means: in prose, in music, or in a philosophic treatise. For *East Coker* is not merely an experience, it is also a statement. It succeeds in producing the sense of man's isolation in the midst of darkness, and his desire to achieve union with God. These phrases are meaningless, or, rather, are outworn, in themselves; but they are not meaningless in Eliot's poem: he has re-created the experience which they imply.

But what is the effect of poetry which uses poetry as a medium to re-create an experience which is outside the poetry itself? It is, that poetry is stepping out of a world of isolated poetic experiences and insisting on the significance of the kind of truth that poetry can describe in the real world, and, quite literally, in the contemporary situation.

‘O dark, dark, dark. They all go into the dark,  
 The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,  
 The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,’

In this passage the poetry seems to say, ‘This is poetic truth, but also it is literal truth, on which religion is based, existing in the world, which you cannot get away from.’ Throughout *East Coker* Eliot makes use of religious experience to insist on eternal and universal truths which have always existed and which exist like shining and rather terrible jewels in the sombre contemporary setting which he can convey with greater ease than any other of the moderns.

So, to some extent, Eliot's poetry insists on its presence in the world of actuality. Yet although it invokes religion, and might even invoke politics, it is not a substitute for religion or a loud-speaker of a political party. No. What it insists on is the reality of the kind of truth which poetry can describe: the human situation. It is as though there might be a party of poets bearing not the slogans of politics and psycho-analysts, but the slogans of poetry: 'In His will is our peace'; 'Ripeness is all'; and Rilke's 'You must change your life'. These can be insisted on as statements about reality, and they are also poetic statements. A time is coming when, without being a substitute for anything or propaganda of any cause, they might play their part in giving the world a sense of values.

Auden, Empson, George Barker, Cecil Day-Lewis, are also to a great extent conscious of the poet's task. *Another Time* is a hotch-potch, a book made up of journeys, personalities, affairs and occasions, reflecting the writer's restlessness at this stage in his development, and to some extent also his self-consciousness as a public figure. Some of the addresses to illustrious figures, Yeats, Toller, Freud, are slightly perfunctory, it must be admitted. Still, it is right and not without a certain dignity that there should be a young poet who has made himself into a kind of unofficial Poet Laureate. This is the more responsible side of Auden's nature. The office of Laureate has long been mentally vacant, even if it is filled with a 'public face'. Auden is a kind of substitute with which we have been compensated. If I am bombed, I hope he will write a few sapphics about me.

Yet the poems about the great men of the past indicate something more than an occasion: the isolation of the poet searching for spiritual equals and forefathers. The numerous poems on great men in the first section of the book are invocations of the ancestors of the spirit to strengthen it in the present.

Auden breaks into his fullest expression of his consciousness of his poetic task in 'September 1st, 1939':

'All I have is a voice  
To undo the folded lie,  
The romantic lie in the brain  
Of the sensual man-in-the-street  
And the lie of Authority

Whose buildings grope the sky:  
 There is no such thing as the State  
 And no one exists alone;  
 Hunger allows no choice  
 To the citizen or the police;  
 We must love one another or die.'

This book leaves me wondering about Auden's poetic future. It seems that there is a danger of his floating off into generalizations at the very moment when he might have come to far closer grips with reality. This book is too general, too abstract, too vague, too scattered and too diffuse; all too often. Of course, in England we are being blasted by the concrete and the particular, so perhaps this makes us over-conscious of the abstractedness of many of the books of advice from America.

As a poet, Empson stands at the opposite pole to Auden. By this I do not mean that he is in the rearguard: on the contrary, he has claims to be most 'advanced'. But whereas even poets like Dylan Thomas and George Barker can be said to have been released by Auden's dynamic appeals to the subconscious and the uninhibited, Empson stands with his 'Just a Smack at Auden' at the opposite extreme, a rigid, eccentric, repressed brain hammering out its patterns of twisted words wrought like iron. The results are often over-contorted and entirely lacking in movement. But where they succeed, he produces something which can withstand Auden's flow, and which has a firm beauty and high technical standard of its own. At times these poems can be profound and moving:

'Slowly the poison the whole blood stream fills.  
 It is not the effort nor the failure tires.  
 The waste remains, the waste remains and kills.'

Occasionally he writes in the grand manner:

'A wheel of fire that span her head across  
 Borne soaring forward through a crowd of cloud  
 Robed in fire round as heaven's cope  
 The god had lit up her despair to fire  
 Fire behind grates of a part of her despair  
 And rang like bells the vaults and the dark arches.'



There are notes at the end of the volume. Sometimes they are interesting, but they are written in the fake-familiar style of the super-highbrow don when he decides to be frank with his pupils:

'These notes may well look absurdly pretentious, and they start off with the most extreme example. Some of the later ones are more like travel notes, and anyway I think many people (like myself) prefer to read poetry mixed with prose: it gives you more to go by; the conventions of poetry have been getting far off from normal life, so that to have a prose bridge makes reading poetry seem more natural.'

As the notes do very little to clarify the poems, the reader will not be readily reassured by this.

When Empson's poetry overcomes obscurity it has moments of beautiful lucidity. If he can get rid of his mannerisms and decarbonize his system from an excess of undigested research into obscure topics, he may write the most lucid, instead of the most obscure, contemporary poetry.

A limited edition of poems by Day-Lewis cannot be overlooked in a survey of the year's poetry, even though they may not be obtainable by the time this appears. The columnists, when they have nothing better to write about, keep on saying that no poems have been written about the war: actually, dozens have, and here are one dozen of them. It is true that there are no front line blood and mud poems, but this may be because there has been no trench warfare. Nor have there been poems about those tanks: this is probably because now that the war has entered into a super-mechanical, non-human phase which dwarfs human existence, it is as intractable to poetry as are other triumphs of mechanized industry.

Cecil Day-Lewis's poems are mostly either meditations on the situation which produced the war or else descriptions of the less spectacular side of war, the Home Guard, for example. The best of the meditative poems seems to me to be 'The Dead' (published in *Horizon*). In the other manner I like much 'The Watching Post' and 'The Stand-to'. Day-Lewis's poetry moves with greater ease than previously, it is beautiful to the ear, and has genuinely passionate qualities. When he avoids generalization and comes to the particular he is a most interesting poet. 'The

Innocent' is a touching and effective recollection of childhood; 'One and One' is all the better for being about a maturer experience.

In some of the lyrics, for example, 'The Poet', I find the rhythms too frictionless, the emotions bordering on the sentimental. However, it must be remembered that Day-Lewis is an Irish poet, and Irish poetry has different standards from the English tradition. It is more musical, softer in texture and imagery, it is best when it moves without such impediments as difficult processes of thought and over-harsh realities. It can only deal with these when it has acquired the strength to do so without losing its singing quality (as in late Yeats). Mr. McNeice is another Irish writer. His poetry has great facility, by which I mean he only writes when a subject presents to him a clear run from beginning to end. He does not have the urge to write about subjects which present difficult problems to be solved in the process of creation. He writes only when these problems have been solved already. His new volume, like Day-Lewis's, touches on the war, but I cannot say that it interprets much war experience. (It was published at the beginning of last year.) The war is used as an excuse to write some very 'occasional' love poetry. These poems are pleasant and enjoyable, but they do not add much to MacNeice as a poet. Three or four are good enough to take a place amongst his better work, but that is really all. If he adopted a slightly less devil-may-care attitude, his facility, his sentiment, would not matter. So far from pushing these too far, he does not use them with sufficient intensity. Heine pushed such qualities much further.

George Barker has an apocalyptic vision of the world. *Lament and Triumph* is an admirable name for his volume: he laments in his triumphs and triumphs in his laments. The real and the fantastic, the past and the present, all geographical space, exist on equal terms in his highly coloured imagination. He has a splendid and audacious ignorance which gives his visions of history and geography a brilliant inaccuracy and freshness. In his case ignorance is quite justified, because it is innocence. His 'Vision of '39', with its rapid journeys through English history, his 'Austrian Requiem' and his 'Elegy on Spain', have the spontaneity of a child's reactions to an historical pageant or to the Chamber of Horrors. He has genius. Whether that genius will lose its ignorance to become dull and instructed, or whether he will be able to

organize his knowledge and experience without losing it, is his problem. Has he the intellectual strength to grow, or are his poems a firework display? The present lot show greater strength than any which he has published before.

There are two other younger poets whose work is extremely interesting: Ruthven Todd and Francis Scarfe. Ruthven Todd's poems are, I think, privately printed and unobtainable, but like Day-Lewis's, they are an event which a survey of the year's poetry cannot ignore. These poems are somewhat monotonous in form and matter, but they have great intelligence and intellectual power and a clear imagery. Ruthven Todd understands what he is writing about, and his poetry, although at times difficult, is never vague or meaningless. There is a little too much of Europe, Vienna, Madrid, bombs, etc., in his poems. These images have become clichés of horror and something less enormous is needed to replace their all too eloquent associations. The play Hamlet produced, remember, he called *The Mousetrap*. We grow too used to air raids for an air raid to give us the sensation of an air raid any longer. It has to be re-created.

The first of Francis Scarfe's poems is called 'Smithereens, 1937-1940. For David Gascoyne, in Memory of Abyssinia, China, Spain, Czecho Slovakia, Poland, France, etc.' If I know Mr. Gascoyne, he was probably in bed during most of these: it would take more than that to get him up. This is another way of saying that all these symbols are too violent. However, Mr. Francis Scarfe is really a tremendous enthusiast about everything. That is what makes his poems so attractive.

His smithereens are charming; they are like cut paper flowers:

'So many evenings  
North wind sharp in the cracking pines  
Sleet in the jibsails of the fishing smacks  
Lake ruffled crêpe de chine  
Where the swan sings  
Softly my lady sleeps.'

Sometimes he trips over himself in his excitement and becomes incoherent. This is a great mistake. His pandemonium should always be organized as charmingly as the ravishing little

poem called 'Winter'. I recommend this book. It has delightful qualities.

I must confess that I get stuck in Mr. Eberhardt's poems. He is so trite and correct in the higher realms of American thought. Here is the beginning of a poem called 'Realm', dedicated to W. H. Auden. It reads like the answers to a catechism of the New Life set by Mr. Gerald Heard. (Needless to add, he has got all the answers right.)

'Goodness is impersonality  
 Evil is personality,  
 Desire is impotent  
 Serenity is potent.  
 Despair is powerless  
 Joy is power  
 Desire and despair are impotent  
 Fire consumes itself  
 And pain eats up itself  
 In circles circling  
 But serenes keep straight  
 And on and joy straight.  
 Man can contemplate his navel.'

The last line brings me pat as a News-Magazine in a News Reel to Mr. Sassoon's self-contemplative Ruminations. Probably Mr. Sassoon's career as a poet has been a disappointment to many of his admirers. During the last war he wrote poems of great audacity which were only excelled by Wilfrid Owen, whose poems had greater objectivity. Since then he has withdrawn more and more into a world of lovely music, beautiful houses, childhood and fine horses, and himself. Nevertheless, one can be grateful for some of these meticulous little miniatures, and for the mild irony of his satiric poems.

Christopher Hassal's *S.O.S. Ludlow* is like a very skilfully done Royal Academy painting of a shipwreck. The sea is the right green we ask ourselves 'How did he manage the scum on the waves so well?', the ship is going down, and yet something is missing. A portrait of a feeling has been done, but the feeling itself is never



e-created. The fakiness of the poem is given away (in my opinion) by the grandiloquent speech at the end made by the sea.

Messrs. Faber and Faber and The Hogarth Press have shown great enterprise in pushing poetry during the war by publishing each a cheap series of selected poems by moderns. Fabers include selections from W. H. Auden, Roy Campbell, T. S. Eliot, Louis MacNeice, Ezra Pound, Herbert Read, Siegfried Sassoon, Edith Sitwell, and Edward Thomas, in their Sesame Series at 2s.6d. each. At the same price, the New Hogarth Library starts off with William Plomer and Cecil Day-Lewis. It is particularly pleasant to have a selection of Herbert Read's and William Plomer's poems. Herbert Reid's poetry seems to be unduly neglected, and Mr. Plomer is better known as a prose writer than as a poet. Plomer's poetry is certainly the occasional writing of one who is primarily a prose writer, but it has the merits of the writer's very clear eye, and of his knowledge of the limits within which he is writing. He is one of the few living writers who can write very amusing light verse. His descriptive poems are concise and fresh and genuine.

In this review I have tried to indicate what is the main line of development in poetry to-day, and then relate the particular books of the year to it. My point is that poets show a tendency to question their function as poets, and poetry tends, therefore, to step out of a world of its own into the real world, where it insists on the validity of poetic truth. It seems to me likely that poetry will develop more and more, not as a philosophic inquiry but as philosophic language: a use of all its resources to insist on what is unchanging in the relation of man living at a given time (the present) to the universe, and to the whole of the past, present and future: a pressing forward of questions about the nature of existence, which political parties and political aims ignore.

Poetry may well be propaganda in so far as it insists on the objective reality of certain poetic truths. It will, therefore, insist also on conditions of life which permit men to enjoy a sense of these values. The present in relation to the past has got—to put it crudely—out of hand. To re-establish the sense of continuity of past, present and future; not to become lost in a mass of seemingly unprecedented contemporary phenomena is a prodigious task, because it involves developing an understanding of the spiritual significance of these phenomena. What is needed above all is

clarity. The best that can be said of modern poetry is that it shows a realization of how difficult a clarity which is inclusive and not shallow is to obtain. Without clarity, Auden's 'Change of Heart' and Rilke's *Du musst dein Leben aendern* remain only as advice to a few friends speaking the same language as the poet.

SOME POETRY PUBLISHED IN 1940

*East Coker*, by T. S. Eliot (Faber, 1s.)

*Another Time*, by W. H. Auden (Faber, 7s. 6d.)

*The Gathering Storm*, by William Empson (Faber, 7s. 6d.)

*Lament and Triumph*, by George Barker (Faber, 7s. 6d.)

*Rhymed Ruminations*, by Siegfried Sassoon (Faber, 6s.)

*Ten Poems* by Ruthven Todd.

*Poems in Wartime* by Cecil Day-Lewis (Cape, 2s. 6d.)

*Inscapes* by Francis Scarfe (Fortune Press).

*S. O. S. Ludlow*, by Christopher Hassall (Cape, 5s.)

Sesame Books (Faber) and The New Hogarth Library (Hogarth)

## JOHN BETJEMAN

# A SUBALTERN'S LOVE SONG

Miss J. Hunter Dunn, Miss J. Hunter Dunn,  
Furnish'd and burnish'd by Aldershot sun,  
What strenuous singles we played after tea,  
We in the tournament—you against me.

Love-thirty, love-forty, oh! weakness of joy,  
The speed of a swallow, the grace of a boy,  
With carefulest carelessness, gaily you won,  
I am weak from your loveliness, Joan Hunter Dunn.

Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, Miss Joan Hunter Dunn,  
How mad I am, sad I am, glad that you won.  
The warm-handled racket is back in its press,  
But my shockheaded victor, she loves me no less.

Her father's euonymus shines as we walk  
And swing past the summerhouse, buried in talk,  
And cool the verandah that welcomes us in  
To the six o'clock news and a lime juice and gin.

The scent of the conifers, south of the bath,  
The view from my bedroom of moss-dappled path,  
As I struggle with double-end evening tie,  
For we dance at the Golf Club, my victor and I.

On the floor of her bedroom lie blazer and shorts  
And the cream-coloured walls are be-trophied with sports,  
And westering, questioning settles the sun  
On your low leaded window, Miss Joan Hunter Dunn.

The Hillman is waiting, the light's in the hall,  
The pictures of Egypt are bright on the wall,  
My sweet, I am standing beside the oak stair  
And there on the landing's the light in your hair.

By roads not adopted, by woodland ways  
She drove to the club in the late summer haze,  
Into nine o'clock Camberley, heavy with bells  
And mushroomy, pinewoody evergreen smells.

Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, Miss Joan Hunter Dunn,  
I can hear from the car park the dance has begun.  
Oh! full Surrey twilight! importunate band!  
Oh! strongly adorable tennis girl's hand.

Around us are Rovers and Austins afar,  
Above us, the intimate roof of the car,  
And here on my right is the girl of my choice,  
With the tilt of her nose and the chime of her voice,

And the scent of her wrap, and the words never said,  
And the ominous, ominous dancing ahead.  
We sat in the car park till quarter to one  
And now *I'm engaged to* MISS JOAN HUNTER DUNN.

# KEIDRYCH RHYS

## WEEK END IN GOWER

Tin plate rust slips by. Streamers of smoke, pale blue,  
Puffed out, flee our course, making slow muscular turns  
In sky's sham light. Soon down by level and deep shades  
Powerful sea birds arch over; out, a gale bellies;

Thrives on sleep, for the house is perched on a cliff,  
A summer sun-trap steep to a pencilled bay and  
Far away fawn sand chop; a jackdaw is clenched  
In a nerve window—not real any more but, no fake.

After breakfast a trawler stops opposite, while we,  
My host in foreign shorts, explore broad-in-chest caves,  
Pwllldû, the hidden river; this winter's ring on stone  
Wooing the echo beside wet and wood, and soil more loose.

Now the stiff climb some duck-necked oyster catchers.  
Recall a poet's hæmorrhage at base; talk bosh.  
Watch specs move up towards sight-seers' crags, so we, late  
Just before tea time dare go, and I wind-in-jawbone man.

Like madmen, busy, pass over our mutual heath grass,  
Mark rock on trees, small ponies at their toilet,  
The housetops round Pennard Castle, that single sentinel,  
Appetites for evening palate, when croquet is played.

How easy drown all riveting here and one's own fluid iron side;  
Fowls, wired, flat; the rusty rivers of descendant worlds  
Over buttered toast! A miserable enough bus ride back.  
Yet my happy ghost-in-hell would haunt no coast. A sad thing.

## SELECTED NOTICES

*The Long Week-End.* By Robert Graves and Alan Hodge. Faber & Faber. 12s. 6d.

This is a poorish book, though, as one would expect from its distinguished part-authorship, there are interesting things in it. The trouble is to know what its authors intended it to be and for



what public they meant it. They describe the book in their subtitle as 'A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939'. But, of course, it is not that; nor, on the other hand, is it good entertainment. It is really a variegated scrapbook made up out of the Press over the last twenty years. As such it has a sort of unity, more particularly of tone: a flippant indifferentism, masquerading as impartiality, which it applies equally to all subjects, whether the affairs of an Horatio Bottomley or of Europe, the matrimonial difficulties of Edward VIII or the literature and art of the period, the drift of the Continent towards war, or the discarding of whalebone corsets. The effect is wholly deplorable. There are subjects where such treatment is in place and is mildly effective as irony—though rather weak at that: the Jubilee, the Coronation, Godfrey Winn, the Archbishop of Canterbury, sport, the churches. But to treat that kind of subject on the same level and all in the same breath as the disgraceful record of the English governing class in the last twenty years,—the trickery with which they have run the country at home, the fraudulent and panicked elections (all in the name of democracy) of 1918, 1924, 1931, 1935, the treachery of their conduct of the country's affairs abroad, over China, Abyssinia, Spain, in their attitude towards Mussolini, Hitler, and Soviet Russia, all the mingled incompetence and sabotage of the country's interests which have landed us in the tragedy we so richly deserve,—well, it shows something wrong with the whole conception of this book to treat everything in the same tone of flippancy and *dénigrement*. I suppose it comes from the initial mistake of viewing the period as a long week-end, whereas it would be more in keeping to regard it as a disgraceful nightmare. The last twenty years in our history would need a Swift to do it justice, Goya to comment on it.

The most shocking sections of the book are those which deal with literature and art: they read like a deliberate pandering to, as certainly they are an encouragement of, the worst prejudices of w-brow readers of the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, etc. Of the greatest poet of the time, all that Messrs. Graves and Hodge have to say is that Yeats in his old age turned to the East for inspiration, collaborating with an Indian pundit in a translation of the panishads—after first abandoning his Celtic Twilight for a rushed-up neo-American style, and then dabbling in spiritualism.' The account of Eliot and Mrs. Woolf is no better; while 'Auden

was a synthetic writer and perhaps never wrote an original line; but modern literature was so extensive that his communistic use of contemporary work was not at first suspected.' Could anything be more frivolous and silly than that as a judgement upon the work of a poet who has exercised a more originating influence than any other among his contemporaries? Whenever D. H. Lawrence's name is mentioned it is invariably to hold him up to ridicule—in which, nevertheless, one detects an uneasy strain: is it, perhaps, jealousy? The status of writers nowadays among their countrymen is not so high that they can afford to go in for such wholesale and irresponsible depreciation of their colleagues: a dangerous form of *trahison des clercs*. (Lest I seem to offend against my own principle, I should add that I have a high regard for Mr. Graves's poetry and that I enjoy his historical novels.)

There are, however, some better things in the book. There is an illuminating, respectful passage about Miss Riding: the authors were quite right to pick out the painting of Christopher Wood for praise. Too much is made of T. E. Lawrence and of what he said in private letters to Mr. Graves; all the same, by far the most interesting thing in the book is a sentence about him. They note his idealization of the 'little man', the 'lower middle-class John Citizens of whom R.A.F. mechanics were largely made, and who in Germany and Italy were the backbone of the Fascist and Nazi revolutions; he even played with the idea of himself becoming a dictator. If he had not been killed in a road accident shortly after his discharge he would have found the temptation to strong political action almost irresistible.' Most interesting; for, of course, Lawrence was precisely of the stuff of which an English Hitler might have been made—there was all the asceticism, the mechanical-mindedness, the appeal to the young men.

This book professes in its first sentence 'to serve as a reliable record of what took place'. Reliable it certainly is not. We are not likely to pay much attention as history to a book that tells us that Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* (1895) appeared in 1920; that Lawrence refused an O.M. and an earldom for his war services (not the first time he put a tall one over a confiding friend); that gives the Labour Party a vote of over two millions in 1918; that hands out Arnold Zweig's *Sergeant Grischa* to Stefan Zweig, etc., etc. But really the mistakes are too many for the mere historian to catch up with.

A. L. ROWSE